

**DISMANTLING THE DISCIPLINE GAP: USING STUDENT-CENTERED COACHING
CYCLES TO INCREASE CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM
MANAGEMENT PRACTICES**

by
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Abstract

Black students in urban settings receive more exclusionary disciplinary consequences, such as suspensions and expulsions, than students of other races (Triplett et al., 2014). Exclusionary consequences for students result in higher dropout rates (Council on School Health, 2013), a reduced sense of belonging in school, and academic failure due to the loss of instructional time (Skiba, Arredondo & Williams, 2014). Utilizing a qualitative case study design, this study sought to explore how the use of student-centered coaching cycles could increase educator knowledge and use of culturally responsive classroom management practices to better support diverse student learners. Participants in the study engaged in two, four-to-six-week coaching cycles that aimed to address a challenge they were facing in their classrooms. Working with an external coach, participants set goals, implemented strategies, and gathered student data to assess progress towards coaching goals. The findings of the study showed that the coaching cycles helped increase educator knowledge in areas related to instructional practices, developing relationships, and student support. The participants also saw changes in their use of culturally responsive classroom management practices as it related to their instruction and student support. This study contributes to the literature on the ways that coaching could be used to meet the individual needs of educators and the diverse student populations they serve.

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Dissertation Approval Form



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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated firstly to my family. To my Mami and Papi who gave up everything to come to the United States and build a life for my siblings and me. Without your constant sacrifices, I would not be where I am today. Thank you for always believing in me, pushing me to pursue all my passions, and never giving up on my dreams. Te quiero con todo mi corazón.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my black and brown students. I see you, I hear you, and I stand with you. Continue to challenge systems, break down walls and barriers, and create seats at tables where decisions are being made about you. Don't be afraid to make mistakes and try new things. Use those failures and challenges to push you forward because you are capable and worthy of all the greatness that comes your way.

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Executive Summary

Discipline is one of the most significant problems in education (Bushaw & Gallup, 2008; Skiba, Mediratta, & Rausch, 2016). Empirical evidence over the last 40 years has shown the disproportionate rate of disciplinary practices based on students' race (Pena-Shaff, Bessette-Symons, Tate, & Fingerhut, 2019), a phenomenon known as the discipline gap (Gregory & Mosely, 2004).

Problem of Practice

Black students in urban settings receive more exclusionary disciplinary consequences, such as suspensions and expulsions, than students of other races (Triplett et al., 2014). Exclusionary consequences for students result in higher dropout rates (Council on School Health, 2013), a reduced sense of belonging in school, and academic failure due to the loss of instructional time (Skiba, Arredondo & Williams, 2014). Although suspension and expulsion may be necessary to address serious offenses, such as weapons or drug possession, suspensions in urban schools are increasing for non-weapon and nondrug offenses, such as insubordination or fighting (Gastic, 2016; Vavrus & Cole, 2002). Nationwide, the rate of suspensions for minor offenses, such as insubordination and defiance, increased from 22% in 1999 to 43% in 2017. In contrast, the rate of suspensions for more serious offenses, such as possession of drugs or weapons, decreased from 50% to 22% (Steinberg & Lacoe, 2017). Even when controlling for other factors, including attitude, socioeconomic status, misbehavior, and poverty, Black students receive harsher punishments at school than their White peers (Welch & Payne, 2010). Freeman and Steidl (2016) found that schools with higher numbers of Black students are more likely to provide out-of-school suspensions or expulsions than wealthier schools with predominantly White student populations (Freeman & Steidl, 2016). During the 2014–2015 school year in

Massachusetts, Black and Latino students comprised 27% of the total enrollment and 55% of all suspensions and expulsions (Dowcett, Enright, Heilman, & Meschino, 2016). There have been efforts to reduce the use of exclusionary consequences (Chin, Dowdy, Jimerson, & Rime, 2012); however, the discipline gap remains for Black students (Lustick, 2017). Therefore, the problem of practice in this study was understanding and addressing the factors that contribute to the discipline gap for Black students.

Synthesis of Relevant Research Related to the Problem

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory suggests that several environments have indirect and direct impacts on the disproportionate use of discipline for Black students in urban settings. The exosystem factors that contribute to the discipline gap for Black students include the school-to-prison pipeline and cultural biases. The school-to-prison pipeline indicates that educators discipline students in ways similar to the criminal justice system, providing an overarching view of how educators view their roles in creating a culture in which Black students receive constant penalization. Punitive discipline causes students to have limited opportunities to advance academically (Losen & Martinez, 2013). In turn, constant penalization could cause Black students to have more encounters with the criminal justice system (Nicholson-Crotty et al., 2009).

Cultural biases are a macrosystem factor that contributes to the school-to-prison-pipeline. The majority of teachers in urban schools are White and use their cultural norms as a basis for judging student behaviors (Staats, 2014). Therefore, a lack of understanding about students' cultural norms and beliefs could cause teachers to misinterpret learners' actions (McGrady & Reynolds, 2013). Teachers who misconstrue student behavior could inappropriately administer disciplinary consequences (Gregory & Mosely, 2004).

Research Purpose and Objective

Studies have shown that positive interventions are means of reducing the schoolwide use of exclusionary practices (Chin et al., 2012). However, positive interventions do not address the discipline gap between Black and White students (Lustick, 2017). The discipline gap remains for Black students even in schools that provide positive interventions and reduce exclusionary practices (Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008). Positive interventions have not been an effective means of reducing the discipline gap because they do not address the needs of culturally diverse students (Lustick, 2017).

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of coaching cycles on teachers' knowledge of culturally responsive classroom management (CRCM) practices. Coaching cycles provide supports and structures for addressing the needs of educators and their classrooms (Sweeney & Harris, 2017). Additionally, the study focused on the impact of CRCM practices on teachers' beliefs and perceptions of student misbehaviors. The study had the following process and outcome research questions:

Process Research Question 1: To what extent was the intervention implemented as originally intended?

Process Research Question 2: How did the participants describe the quality of the coaching they received in the coaching cycles?

Outcome Research Question 1: In what ways did the participants' knowledge of CRCM change after participating in this intervention?

Outcome Research Question 2: How have participants' classroom management strategies changed after participating in the intervention?

Research Design

This study utilized an instrumental, explanatory case study design to explore the impact of the coaching cycles on the educators' knowledge of CRCM practices and strategies for addressing the behaviors of culturally diverse student learners.

Intervention

The intervention study consisted of two preintervention trainings, pre- and postinterviews, and two coaching cycles. The goal of this first training was to inform participants about the purpose of the study, the intended outcomes, and the intervention's timeline and duration. The second training helped participants make connections between using student-centered coaching cycles and culturally responsive classroom management. Another key component of the intervention was one-on-one interviews to gather pre- and postintervention data on the participants' knowledge and use of culturally responsive classroom management practices.

In addition to the training and interviews, each participant engaged in two coaching cycles lasting 4 to 6 weeks. The coaching cycle comprised four stages: goal-setting, preassessment, implementation, and reassessment. The goal-setting stage helped participants create a coaching cycle goal. The preassessment stage was a time to gather data on current instructional practices and student outcomes. During the implementation stage, participants integrated the strategies discussed with the coach into their instruction. Finally, participants used student data, observation debriefs, and reflections to assess progress toward the coaching goal in the reassessment stage.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection occurred virtually via online platforms due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Qualitative data were collected via pre- and post-interviews, reflection forms, meeting

notes, and observation notes. Each data source underwent four coding cycles. The first three cycles served the purpose of finding themes for each participant and the last cycle allowed this researcher to identify high-level trends across both participants. The first three cycles consisted of in vivo coding, color coding, and individual thematic coding; the last cycle entailed group thematic coding across both participants.

Findings

This qualitative case study was a means to explore how student-centered coaching cycles could increase teachers' knowledge and use of culturally responsive classroom management practices to better meet the needs of their students. By using student-centered coaching, educators can connect their instructional practices to student outcomes (Sweeney, 2014). Additionally, as evidenced by the intervention, the collaborative nature of the coaching provides educators with a safe place to try new strategies, discuss challenging situations, and create targeted goals to address a particular problem (Knight, 2018).

The study's findings showed that student-centered coaching cycles could help educators better understand and support their students. Both participants saw progress toward their coaching cycle goals and found using student data a valuable tool to assess their instructional practices. The themes of instructional practice, developing relationships, and student support emerged around changes to knowledge and culturally responsive classroom management practices because of the coaching cycles. Muniz (2019) posited that educators who engage in culturally responsive classroom management utilize content that is relevant to their students. One key finding across both participants was adjusting the curriculum to include more content with which the students identified. Additionally, in both of their coaching goals, participants aimed to increase student voice in the classroom, thereby boosting student engagement. Furthermore,

engaging in instructional practices that consider the needs of diverse student learners is another key aspect of culturally responsive classroom management (Gay, 2010). Both participants highlighted the changes to their practice, such as including more wait time to help students process, incorporating reflections into their lessons, and pushing students to engage more thoughtfully in the content.

Equally as crucial as being intentional about one's instructional practices is developing authentic relationships with students. Teachers from cultures or backgrounds different than their students may struggle to build authentic and successful relationships with their students (Kozlowski, 2015). Participants in this study began to think about how their relationships with students can play a role in the students' perceptions of the class culture. They considered various techniques to increase student-to-student interactions and in the process were able to learn more about themselves and their students. Continuing to develop relationships with students could help increase students' sense of belonging (Côté-Lussier & Fitzpatrick, 2016), which, in turn, increases their engagement within the classroom (Bondy et al., 2007).

Educators in a culturally responsive classroom use a variety of activities to support the needs and learning styles of diverse students (Gay, 2002). Through the coaching cycles, participants identified various ways to support their student learners, including positive narration, differentiated ways of engaging in a lesson, and students being active participants in their learning. Many Black students base their perceptions of success on how their teachers view them (Hinojosa, 2008). Therefore, finding ways to meet students where they are, setting high expectations, and pushing students to meet those expectations can help build students' confidence in their abilities.

Chapter 1

Discipline Gap for Black Students in Urban Settings

Discipline is one of the most significant problems in education (Bushaw & Gallup, 2008; Skiba, Mediratta, & Rausch, 2016). Empirical evidence over the last 40 years has shown the disproportionate rate of disciplinary practices based on students' race (Pena-Shaff, Bessette-Symons, Tate, & Fingerhut, 2019), a phenomenon known as the discipline gap (Gregory & Mosely, 2004). In a joint 2014 letter, the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Education (USDoE) indicated that school administrators should not have discriminatory discipline policies based on race, gender, or origin (Cornell, 2015). The letter was in response to the Office for Civil Rights' (2012) finding that Black students were two to three times more likely to experience suspension or expulsion than White students. Despite the U.S. Department of Education directive, educators still rely on punitive consequences, such as suspensions and expulsions, to address student behavior (Skiba, Mediratta, & Rausch, 2016).

The segregation and discrimination against Black students for discipline and academic achievement continue to occur (Triplett, Allen, & Lewis, 2014). On May 16, 1954, the *Brown vs. the Board of Education* ruling prohibited segregation in U.S. schools. After the *Brown* case, educators could not legally treat students differently based on race or skin color (Guinier, 2004). However, as recently as 2014, the U.S. Department of Justice and the USDoE found national disparities in discipline administration. Educators suspend and expel more Black students than students from other subgroups (USDoE, 2014), showing that Black students face racial discrimination and unfair disciplinary practices. As a result, the U.S. Department of Justice and USDoE suggested that schools avoid zero-tolerance policies, which automatically provide

suspensions and expulsions based on student offenses, disproportionately affecting Black and Latino students.

A closer look at suspensions provides insight into student offenses and discipline. According to federal regulations and Massachusetts law on student discipline (603 CMR 53.00), educators can administer two forms of suspensions: in-school and out-of-school. In-school suspension consists of removing a student from the regular classroom setting but not the school building; in contrast, Out-of-school suspension means removing a student from both the regular classroom setting and the school building (M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H¾). Schools can provide either short- or long-term in-school and out-of-school suspensions, defined as removing a student for up to or more than 10 days, respectively (603 CMR 53.00). Finally, expulsion is removal from the regular class setting and the school building for more than 90 days, permanently, or indefinitely (M.G.L. c. 71, § 37H).

The use of exclusionary consequences, such as suspensions and expulsions, resulted from the Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994, a response to the 1999 Columbine High School shooting (Triplett et al., 2014). Educators increased their use of exclusionary consequences for offenses related to disrespect and insubordination (Bracy, 2011) to increase school safety and maintain order. However, the exclusionary consequences have had the opposite effect, resulting in hostile and toxic school environments with increased rates of disciplinary issues and the negative consequences related to school climate and student-teacher relationships (Dupper, 2010).

Empirical data have shown that gun violence in schools occurs primarily by White male students in areas identified as suburban and safe (DeLeon, 2012). However, Black students in urban or inner-city schools are more likely experience the adverse effects of the increased use of exclusionary consequences (Osher, Bear, Sprague, & Doyle, 2010). Frequent use of exclusionary

consequences has contributed to higher dropout rates, student disengagement from learning, and the increased likelihood of future suspensions for Black students. (Losen et al., 2015; Osher et al., 2010; Wegman & Smith, 2019).

Black students in urban settings must overcome various stressors, including poverty, violence, and financial hardships (Porche, Costello, & Rosen-Reynoso, 2016). Such hardships alone cause Black students to struggle in meeting the required academic standards to move to the next grade (Porche et al., 2016). In addition, Black students face even greater challenges to grade promotion and overall school success when school leaders employ exclusionary consequences (Skiba, Arredondo, & Williams, 2014). The goal of this study was to identify and examine the factors that contribute to the discipline gap for Black students in urban settings. The following section presents Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory to frame the factors contributing to the discipline gap.

Problem of Practice

Black students in urban settings receive more exclusionary disciplinary consequences, such as suspensions and expulsions, than students of other races (Triplett et al., 2014). Exclusionary consequences for students results in higher dropout rates (Council on School Health, 2013), a reduced sense of belonging in school, and academic failure due to the loss of instructional time (Skiba, Arredondo & Williams, 2014). Although suspension and expulsion may be necessary to address serious offenses, such as weapons or drug possession, suspensions in urban schools are increasing for non-weapon and nondrug offenses, such as insubordination or fighting (Gastic, 2016; Vavrus & Cole, 2002). Nationwide, the rate of suspensions for minor offenses, such as insubordination and defiance, increased from 22% in 1999 to 43% in 2017. In contrast, the rate of suspensions for more serious offenses, such as possession of drugs or

weapons, decreased from 50% to 22% (Steinberg & Lacoë, 2017). Even when controlling for other factors, including attitude, socioeconomic status, misbehavior, and poverty, Black students receive harsher punishments at school than their White peers (Welch & Payne, 2010). Freeman and Steidl (2016) found that schools with higher numbers of Black students are more likely to provide out-of-school suspensions or expulsions than wealthier schools with predominantly White student populations (Freeman & Steidl, 2016). During the 2014–2015 school year in Massachusetts, Black and Latino students comprised 27% of the total enrollment and 55% of all suspensions and expulsions (Dowcett, Enright, Heilman, & Meschino, 2016). There have been efforts to reduce the use of exclusionary consequences (Chin, Dowdy, Jimerson, & Rime, 2012); however, the discipline gap remains for Black students (Lustick, 2017). Therefore, the problem of practice in this study was understanding and addressing the factors that contribute to the discipline gap for Black students.

Theoretical Framework

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory was the theoretical framework for addressing the discipline gap for Black students in urban settings. Bronfenbrenner believed that children's interactions with their environments affect their behaviors. A child's different environments are ecological systems nested within each other, with the child at the center. The theory consists of five major systems—microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem—with direct and indirect influences on how a child develops and behaves. Whereas negative interactions between systems could negatively impact a child's development, a stable and productive environment can positively contribute to an individual's academic achievement, mental health, and social skills (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

In Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model, the microsystem consists of the child's immediate environments, including schools, families, neighborhoods, and friends. Interactions between different microsystem factors are parts of the mesosystem. Within the mesosystem, the intermingling of families and schools, schools and peers, and family members and peers can contribute to a child's experiences and development. Also affecting the child's development, the exosystem contains the settings, relationships, or events outside of the child's involvement that can affect development and behavior (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The exosystem includes principal and teacher preparation programs, state and national policies, and funding. The macrosystem, the system farthest from the child, includes societal beliefs, cultures, and patterns affecting how a child views the world and different experiences. Finally, the chronosystem consists of life changes, beginning within the child and the child's environment. In this study, Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological system theory was the means used to situate the different factors that could contribute to the disproportionate rate of disciplinary actions for Black students in urban settings (see Figure 1.1).

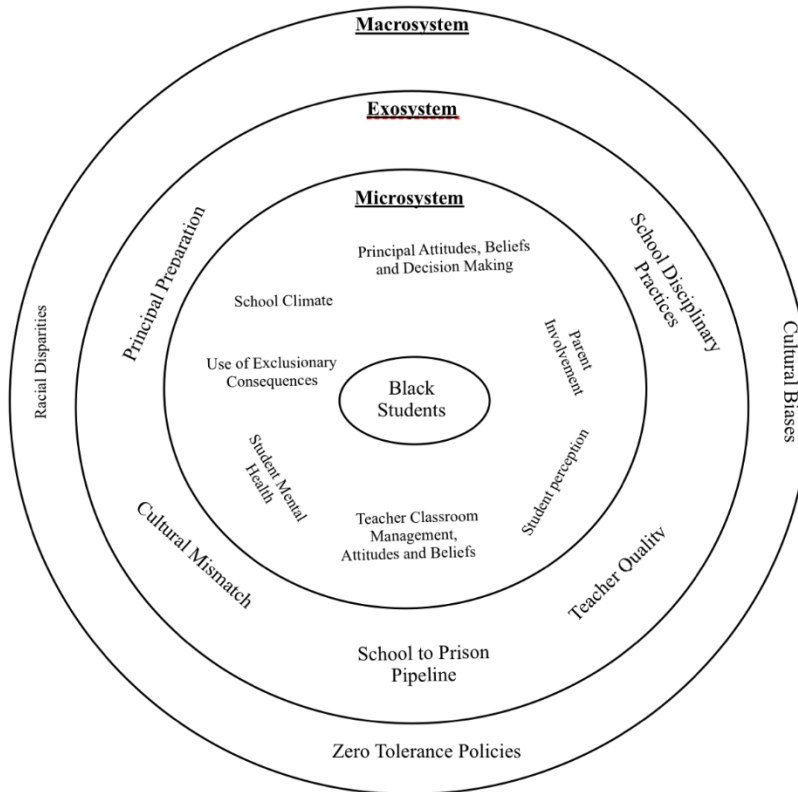


Figure 1.1. The factors contributing to the disproportionate disciplinary rates for Black students based on the ecological systems theory. Adapted from the copyright holder.

The following section presents the factors indirectly or directly affecting the disproportionate discipline rate for Black students in urban settings, including macrosystem, exosystem, and microsystem.

Macrosystem

The macrosystem, the system furthest from the child, consists of societal beliefs, cultures, and patterns (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). In this study, the factors related to the macrosystem include racial disparities, cultural biases, and zero-tolerance policies. The macrosystem components indirectly and directly contribute to the discipline gap for Black students.

Racial Disparities

Racial disparities in discipline are the differences in disciplinary actions for student populations based on race (Dowcett et al., 2016). The Children's Defense Fund, one of the first

organizations to show these disparities, found that educators suspended Black students two to three times more often than their White peers (Children's Defense Fund, 1975). According to Skiba, Mediratta, and Rausch (2016), Black students overrepresent the population of students who face exclusionary consequences in schools.

Ferguson (2001) suggested that racial stereotypes about Black students contribute to the higher rates of disciplinary actions. Further, some White school staff may perceive Black students as loud, overly aggressive (Morris, 2005) and more willing to challenge authority than their White peers (Vavrus & Cole, 2002). Given these perceptions, Black students tend to receive more severe disciplinary consequences than students of other races who exhibit similar behaviors. Black students are also more likely to face consequences for subjective behaviors, such as defiance, insubordination, or disrespect (Morris, 2005; Skiba, Horner, et al., 2011). In sum, societal norms within the macrosystem contribute to adverse outcomes for Black students.

Cultural Biases

Cultural bias is another component of the macrosystem. Individuals in positions of power who are part of the dominant culture do not always recognize their privilege and view their culture as the standard (Monroe, 2005). During the 2015–2016 school year, 70% of teachers in urban public elementary and secondary schools nationwide were White (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). The majority of White staff members in urban schools base their views of normal and acceptable student behaviors on the beliefs and values of a White, middle-class population (Staats, 2014), which often do not align with Black students' and schools' cultures (Gregory & Mosely, 2004). Black students may behave in ways that educators consider oppositional and defiant; however, such behavior is the norm outside of the school environment.

Townsend (2000) highlighted the conflict between school and out-of-school expectations and found dissonance between students' experiences in their home and school cultures.

In school, students progress based on their individual achievements in specific subject areas, advancing to the next grade as a result of their efforts in their classes. However, outside of school, Black households have a shared work ethic (Monroe, 2009). Caregivers do not expect children to do everything independently and do not see this individualistic mindset as beneficial for families. Rather, children in Black households engage with the others around them to achieve different goals, and working together in groups is a promoted and expected standard (Townsend, 2000)

The different expectations between home and school cause tension for students (Lareau, 2014). In the school environment, success is the ability to complete assignments on one's own. However, outside of school, success is the ability to be part of a collective unit, the members of which work together to achieve an outcome (Townsend, 2000). According to Monroe (2009), addressing the cultural differences in expectations for Black students and the impact of these differences on their disciplinary outcomes requires educators to examine the impact of cultural socialization on their decision-making and views of essential success metrics in schools. Monroe also emphasized the need for educators and school leaders to learn about their students' cultural backgrounds to minimize the misinterpretation of behavior and the use of zero-tolerance policies. Understanding students' cultures could enable instructors to become more culturally responsive in their practices. Educators must work with diverse student populations in culturally relevant ways to overcome cultural bias in the macrosystem.

Zero-Tolerance Policies

According to Fenning and Rose (2007), zero-tolerance policies resulted from educators' attempts to fulfill state academic requirements. The academic requirements may cause educators to create systems and policies to remove students who do not behaviorally or academically fit school norms. School leaders often remove students they consider problematic and struggle to follow school rules and expectations (Sbarra & Pianta, 2001).

Zero-tolerance policies provide support for a form of punitive discipline, in which schools enforce a set list of consequences for certain student behaviors (Skiba & Peterson, 2000). The implementation of zero-tolerance policies occurred after the Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994, which required educators to administer at least 1-year expulsions to students carrying guns to school; failure to comply could result in the loss of funding (Bracy, 2011). Legislators hoped that zero-tolerance policies would address student misbehavior and provide a sense of school safety (Casella, 2003). Although zero-tolerance policies were means to address gun violence, many schools have implemented the policies for behaviors such as fighting, disrespect, and insubordination (Bracy, 2011; Gastic, 2016).

Ironically, researchers have found that zero-tolerance policies have had a negative impact on Black students' academic achievement (Kulkarni, 2017), sense of safety (Anyon, Zhang, & Hazel, 2016), and mental health (Achilles, McLaughlin, & Croninger, 2007). Even with poor outcomes, educators continue to administer suspensions and expulsions to maintain order and discipline in schools (Skiba & Peterson, 2000). Curran (2016) examined the effects of state zero-tolerance laws on suspension rates by analyzing two nationally representative data sources. Curran found a positive and statistically significant relationship between the number of Black students in a district and the presence of a state zero-tolerance law. As the number of Black

students in the state increased, so did zero-tolerance laws, resulting in increased suspension rates for this student population. Despite the goals of zero-tolerance policies, researchers have suggested that policy implementation occurs based on the district's racial composition rather than the need for improved school safety (Gregory, Allen, Mikami, Hafen, & Pianta, 2014).

Macrosystem factors are the system factors furthest from a child. However, racial disparities, cultural mismatches, and zero-tolerance policies have contributed to the discipline gap for Black students. These factors have impacted the creation and implementation of disciplinary policies and educators' interpretations of behaviors based on cultural biases in urban settings. The following section presents the exosystem factors with closer connections to children.

Exosystem

Exosystem relationships are two or more settings in which a child is not part. However, exosystem relationships can have an impact on development and behavior (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). The following section presents the urban school exosystem factors contributing to disproportionate discipline rates for Black students in urban settings. The section includes the school-to-prison pipeline, how principals prepare to lead schools, teacher quality, and principals' decision-making.

School-to-Prison Pipeline

The school-to-prison pipeline resembles the school discipline and criminal justice systems (Nicholson-Crotty, Birchmeier, & Valentine, 2009). Black students in urban settings (geographically concentrated due to segregation) tend to move from their educational environments to the criminal justice system due to disciplinary disparities (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Losen & Martinez, 2013). Urban schools in high-poverty areas tend to have large

populations of students of color and lack the necessary resources and training to educate students appropriately, which results in the frequent use of exclusionary practices to manage student misbehavior (Allen & White-Smith, 2014). The segregation of schools by socioeconomic status and race has impacted the school-to-prison pipeline for Black students, who receive less opportunity for educational advancement due to the lack of available resources (Losen & Martinez, 2013). Fewer educational advancement opportunities can result in fewer employment options, a greater likelihood of remaining in poverty, and a greater chance of facing prison time (Allen & White-Smith, 2014).

Barnes and Motz (2018) researched a nationally representative sample to explore the degree to which racial inequalities for arrests resulted from racial inequalities in school disciplinary practices. The researchers indicated that policymakers must intervene with the school disciplinary practices negatively targeted for marginalized racial groups to reduce the likelihood of Black students' future arrests. Furthermore, they suggested that such interventions should directly focus on educators' implicit biases and disciplinary practices within classrooms, two significant factors contributing to the misinterpretation of student behavior.

Disciplinary Practices

Disciplinary practices, key components of the exosystem, are the formal and informal policies used to maintain order and structure in schools (Kulkarni, 2017). Formal disciplinary practices include schoolwide positive behavior supports (Feuerborn & Tyre, 2012), zero-tolerance policies (Dupper, 2010), culturally responsive classroom management (Hambacher, 2018), and restorative justice practices (Payne & Welch, 2013). Disciplinary practices are critical components of school discipline. Thus, there must be a balance between consequences (e.g.,

suspensions) and proactive alternatives to suspension for students to reduce problematic behaviors and produce a positive school culture (Bear, 2012).

Exclusionary consequences are a type of disciplinary practice (Petras, Masyn, Buckley, Ialongo, & Kellam, 2011). Exclusionary consequences are the removal of a student from the academic setting for a time and include (a) suspensions, (b) expulsions, (c) detentions, and (d) office referrals. Exclusionary consequences correlate with decreased feelings of safety (Farmer, 1999), reduced school connectedness (Anyon, Zhang & Hazel, 2016), and a heightened sense of isolation (Pane, Rocco, Miller & Salmon, 2013). However, although suspension and expulsion may be necessary consequences for serious offenses (e.g., weapon or drug possession), there has been increased use of these disciplinary practices in schools for minimal offenses (e.g., insubordination or fighting), especially for Black students (Gastic, 2016; Vavrus & Cole, 2002).

Principal Preparation

School leader and teacher preparation programs are means of cultivating educators who assume different approaches to school policies and classroom practices, an objective for which the programs often fall short (Hawley & James, 2010). Principals have multifaceted roles in which they must handle tasks, such as managing segregated schools. Principals are instructional leaders who manage various school-related factors, including discipline, school culture, and policy (Oplatka & Atias, 2007). Due to their vast responsibilities, principals need ongoing professional development to meet the demands of running a functional and productive school (Foster, Loving, & Shumate, 2000). However, many principal preparation programs do not provide principals with the skills they need to manage the multiple aspects of their jobs (McHatton, Boyer, Shaunessy, & Terry, 2010). As a result, principals might be inexperienced with managing disciplinary systems (Findlay, 2015).

Many principal preparation programs do not address how to acknowledge and create curricula on racial inequalities in schools (Diem & Carpenter, 2013). The core curricula of many of these programs do not include race. Despite efforts to show school leaders the importance of integrating racial awareness into curricula, race is just an additional, optional course for principal candidates (DeMatthews, 2016; Hawley & James, 2010). Accordingly, principal preparation programs cannot provide future school leaders with the skills they need to work in schools with diverse populations (Gooden & O'Doherty, 2014). Principals trained to examine school policies, cultures, and expectations for discriminatory practices are less likely to use punitive consequences, as they know the impacts of these practices on marginalized students (DeMatthews, Carey, Olivarez, & Moussavi Saeedi, 2017). In addition to principal preparation, teacher preparation programs are another exosystem factor that can impact the discipline gap for Black students.

Teacher Preparation

Teachers, like principals, may lack the training needed to work within urban schools. A lack of adequate preparation could cause teachers to misinterpret students' actions and rely on exclusionary and punitive approaches to manage student behaviors (Smith & Smith, 2009). Preservice programs have not remained current with the changing student demographics. Inadequate preservice programs may be one reason why many new teachers quit their jobs shortly after they begin working in urban schools (Creasey, Mays, Lee, & D'Santiago, 2016).

One goal of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB; 2002) was to hold schools accountable for finding highly qualified teachers to educate children. According to the NCLB, the competencies of a highly qualified teacher include a bachelor's degree, state licensing, and content knowledge of the subject or subjects taught (Eslinger, 2014). While the NCLB-required

competencies are essential assets, these standards do not include the cultural responsiveness needed to work in diverse schools (Fickel & Abbiss, 2019). Most teachers working in urban settings are White women who do not share the same ideology, mindset, race, or class as the students they teach (Schauer, 2018). For this reason, teacher preparation programs must include standards and policies to increase teachers' cultural awareness and responsiveness in their teaching practices to support students from diverse backgrounds (King & Butler, 2015).

How prepared teachers feel affects the self-efficacy of their teaching practices and classroom management (Sciuchetti & Yssel, 2019). Both new and experienced teachers often lack the preparation and training needed to work in culturally diverse schools, which contributes to their ineffectiveness in educating students from different backgrounds (Siwatu, Frazier, Osaghae, & Starker, 2011). Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as the belief in one's ability to succeed in specific settings. Teachers with a strong sense of self-efficacy are more likely to use proactive strategies to work with disruptive students (Zee & Koomen, 2016).

Teachers with backgrounds different from their students must fully commit to working in culturally diverse settings, such as urban schools, by understanding the need for self-reflection beyond what they learned in school (Bales & Saffold, 2011). In other words, teachers should review the impact of their personal beliefs on their students and how teachers interact with and educate them. Overall, as an exosystem factor, teacher preparation can impact an educator's teaching habits and ability to feel successful in an urban school. Thus, teacher preparation programs also influence how teachers interpret and manage the behaviors of diverse students.

Teacher-Student Cultural Mismatch

The final component of the discipline exosystem, cultural mismatch is the conflict between a student's culture outside of school versus the culture of the school and the educators

within the academic setting (Stephens, Townsend, Markus, & Phillips, 2012). The tension between internal and external cultures could affect the student/teacher relationship (McGrady & Reynolds, 2013). Teachers from different cultures or backgrounds than their students may struggle to build authentic and successful relationships with their students (Kozlowski, 2015). For that reason, Black students tend to receive more negative feedback from their teachers than students from other races (Scott, Gage, Hirn, & Han, 2019). Some teachers may find Black students more of an emotional and behavioral risk than their White peers (Splett et al., 2018). In other words, some teachers perceive Black students as more likely to engage in disruptive behaviors, such as withdrawal, avoidance, inattentiveness, and depression (Miller, Chafouleas, Welsh, Riley-Tillman, & Fabiano, 2019).

Teachers' biases about students of color contribute to their perceptions of student behavior (McGrady & Reynolds, 2013). Wright, Gottfried, and Le (2017) found that kindergarten students of color with same-race teachers were less likely to exhibit disruptive behaviors. Beyond race, teachers who take a more culturally responsive approach to classroom management create positive environments where students, regardless of race, feel accepted and as if they belong (Ullucci, 2009). Race influences how teachers acknowledge and respond to student behavior; thus, teachers, especially White teachers, must understand the cultural differences between themselves and their students to create caring environments for Black students (Monroe, 2009).

A child is not a direct part of the exosystem. However, the school-to-prison pipeline, principal preparation, teacher quality, and cultural mismatch all impact how a child interprets, builds, and creates relationships within the academic setting. The following section presents how

the factors in the immediate environment of a child's life contribute to the discipline gap for Black students.

Microsystem

The microsystem is a child's immediate environment. The relationships within the microsystem are those with which the child interacts regularly; therefore, these relationships directly impact the child's development and world views (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The following section presents the microsystem factors in school discipline. Among these factors are school administrators' and principals' beliefs, attitudes, and decision-making and teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and classroom management. Additionally, the microsystem includes students' perception, mental health, and parental involvement.

Principal Beliefs and Attitudes

A principal's beliefs and attitudes critically impact the school's overall climate and disciplinary policies and procedures (Booth, Marchbanks, Carmichael, & Fabelo, 2012). Principals' beliefs and use of zero-tolerance policies positively correlate with the number of suspensions at their schools (Heilbrun, Cornell, & Lovegrove, 2015). Mukuria (2002) found that principals at schools with low suspension rates did not use punitive consequences often. Principals with lower suspension rates tend to value and support their teachers, modify disciplinary rules based on circumstances, have strong visions for their schools, foster active parental involvement, and show genuine concern for students (Mukuria, 2002).

However, principals may also hold prejudicial beliefs about student behavior based on race and class (DeMatthews, Carey, Olivarez, & Moussavi Saeedi, 2017). Administrators' explicit and implicit biases could lead them to treat students differently (Okonofua & Eberhardt, 2015). Thus, many of the consequences students receive may not directly link to their actual

behaviors; instead, they may receive consequences based on how the individual involved perceived and interpreted their behaviors (Vavrus & Cole, 2002).

DeMatthews et al. (2017) conducted two rounds of 40- to 80-minute interviews and two focus groups with 10 urban school principals having at least 2 years of experience to explore the effects of their beliefs on their disciplinary decisions. The first interviews consisted of open-ended questions about the principals' personal and professional backgrounds, school contexts, and disciplinary practices. The goal of the second interview was to explore racism, disciplinary policy challenges, student misconduct, and the factors in selecting consequences. After the interviews were focus groups to understand the principals' assumptions about race and class, clarify confusing interview questions, and explore the principals' norms about student behaviors. The researchers found that the principals held negative perceptions about the Black students who lived in poverty and often attributed students' behaviors to poor parenting. The principals also believed that Black parents were less likely to correct their children's behaviors because they disengaged from their children's lives. Many factors, including race and prior experience, could influence a principal's decision-making process (Okonofua & Eberhardt, 2015). Another factor that merits consideration is the effect of gender on beliefs (Oplatka & Atias, 2007).

Oplatka and Atias (2007) explored the influence of gender on beliefs and attitudes. They found that male and female school administrators had different views about discipline. For example, the male administrators believed in the need for control to manage student behavior; in contrast, the female administrators believed in using relationships and collaboration to promote positive school climates and manage student behaviors. In sum, administrators' beliefs of acting in the students' best interest could directly impact their decision-making (Findlay, 2015).

Overall, principals' beliefs and attitudes are microsystems with a direct impact on the disciplinary decisions made for Black students.

Principal Decision-Making

Principals make the final decisions about discipline, school policies and procedures, and student behaviors (Yariz, 2012). As such, principals enact policies to create safe environments for optimal student learning (Smith & Hains, 2012). The factors that can affect a principal's decision-making include parental perceptions, staff expectations, state laws for discipline, and the specific circumstances about which the principal must make decisions (Findlay, 2015). Oplatka and Atias (2007) found that female administrators were more likely to use exclusionary consequences as a last resort. In contrast, male administrators used exclusionary consequences when they believed that the behavior required the consequence.

Race is not the only influence on principal decision-making. Smith and Hains (2012) found that previous experience and personal beliefs contributed to a school administrator's philosophy on discipline. The researchers conducted 30-minute interviews with five urban high school principals and analyzed school artifacts, such as student handbooks and disciplinary referral forms. Many of the participants did not know about the factors impacting their disciplinary philosophies. According to Smith and Hains, previous exposure to various student behaviors is an essential component in how administrators distribute consequences. Thus, administrators must remain aware of the impact of these experiences on their philosophies for discipline.

Principals spend a significant amount of time deciding consequences for student behaviors and could feel limited in how they can respond (Skiba & Rausch, 2006). In other words, some principals in urban settings do not often have the means or staff members required

to enact specific interventions, such as community service or restorative justice practices. These principals may rely on exclusionary disciplinary practices, resulting in the overuse of punitive measures, even for minor behaviors. Fenning et al. (2008) found that even when principals tried to use proactive consequences for student behaviors, those responses primarily consisted of parent-teacher and parent-principal meetings. Such decisions did not focus on the students and the behaviors the principals sought to address. Overall, principals must become familiar with various methods and strategies for addressing student behaviors (Okonofua & Eberhardt, 2015). Principals can feel limited in their response options due to a lack of alternatives at their schools, leading them to administer punitive consequences for minor behaviors (Kennedy, Murphy, & Jordan, 2017). A principal's decision-making process is an important microsystem when analyzing the factors contributing to the discipline gap in urban schools.

Teacher Beliefs and Attitudes

Teachers have beliefs and attitudes that contribute to how they think, behave, and perceive situations in academic settings (Scott et al., 2019). Teachers' beliefs and attitudes can also have an impact on a student's microsystem. Instructors with students of races different than their own might rely upon stereotypes and misconceptions to generate their beliefs about their students' abilities (McGrady & Reynolds, 2013). For example, White teachers may view Black students as more disruptive than their White peers and less likely to put in their full effort. Misperceptions could result in exclusionary consequences if teachers attribute the actions of Black students to misbehavior or disinterest in learning (Pane, Rocco, Miller, & Salmon, 2014). Conversely, teachers who value cultural diversity work on incorporating their students' cultures, heritages, and languages in the classroom. The desire to understand students' cultures could

enable educators to interpret student behavior by acknowledging students' diverse ways of thinking and behaving outside of school (Ullucci, 2009).

Tension can occur if students and teachers have different beliefs and interpret conversations and behaviors differently (Ullucci, 2009). Teachers tend to respond more frequently and more aggressively to behaviors contrary to their beliefs (Sheets, 1996). Teachers' beliefs and attitudes also affect how students perceive themselves (Lynn, Bacon, Totten, Bridges, & Jennings, 2010). Many Black students base their perceptions of success on how their teachers view them. Thus, teachers' negative biases against Black students could contribute to high dropout rates (Hinojosa, 2008). Conversely, teachers who demonstrate belief in their students and hold them to high standards enable their Black students to build their confidence and strive to excel academically to live up to these expectations (Gregory, Hafen, et al., 2016). The relationship between teachers' beliefs and their perceptions of student behaviors could also relate to overall classroom management. Teachers work directly and closely with students; therefore, it is necessary to understand how their beliefs and attitudes as a microsystem contribute to their perceptions of student behaviors.

Classroom Management

Classroom management consists of the strategies and tools that teachers use to create and maintain structure within their learning environments (Emmer & Stough, 2001). Classroom management strategies and tools enable teachers to create positive relationships with their students (Valente, Monteiro, & Lourenço, 2018), help students feel safe in their academic environments (Côté-Lussier & Fitzpatrick, 2016), and promote academic success (Aldrup, Klusmann, Lüdtke, Göllner, & Trautwein, 2018). Teachers with strong classroom management skills tend to administer less-punitive consequences and use more proactive behavior

interventions (Pas, Cash, Obrennan, Debnam, & Bradshaw, 2015). Novice teachers are more likely to view classroom management as their ability to maintain order and discipline in classrooms. Conversely, experienced teachers tend to have established behavioral routines and view classroom management as their ability to progress student learning and engagement in academic content (Wolff, Jarodzka, & Boshuizen, 2017). Teachers must have consistent classroom management techniques to successfully engage in thoughtful, student-centered instruction (Back, Polk, Keys, & McMahon, 2016).

However, urban schools tend to have less-experienced, first-year teachers who do not receive much administrative support (Gagnon & Mattingly, 2012). Teachers who lack support and training are more likely to adopt discipline-oriented approaches to classroom management. However, discipline-oriented approaches negatively associate with the achievement of Black students in urban settings (Skiba & Rausch, 2014).

Deckman (2017) sought to understand the impact of race in new teachers' classroom management skills by conducting a narrative analysis on the classroom management styles of new teachers participating in a 10-week asynchronous seminar on race, gender, and class equity in urban schools. Deckman collected data from 420 posts and responses from seven new teachers, which included participants' initial replies to prompts on organized topics and informal journal entries and their responses to each other. Deckman organized the teachers' classroom management practices into two categories: managing race and race-ing management. Managing race practices consisted of the teaching moves that the educators use to deescalate racial tension. Race-ing management comprised the teaching practices of willingly bringing up race issues and their impact on students. The findings showed that White teachers were more likely to downplay the role of race in their classroom management practices, while the teachers of color were more

likely to bring up and address the impact of race on classroom culture. Deckman also found that the White teachers felt more uncomfortable discussing the impact of their underlying biases in how they worked with Black students. Conversely, the Black teachers had more awareness of how racial tension could harm their classroom management practices. Looking at classroom management as a microsystem requires examining the factors directly impacting educators' perceptions of Black students and the influence of those perceptions on how they interact with this student population (Valente et al., 2018).

School Climate

School climate may have a positive relationship with student mental health (Suldo, McMahan, Chappel, & Loker, 2012), principal self-efficacy (Dahlkamp, Peters, & Schumacher, 2017), decreased use of exclusionary consequences (Huang & Cornell, 2018), and positive classroom management (Martinez, McMahon, Coker, & Keys, 2016). School climate consists of the school norms, beliefs, and values that contribute to individuals' relationships, teaching, learning, and practices in the school environment (Suldo, McMahan, Chappel, & Loker, 2012). Race can impact how individuals perceive school climate (Konold, Cornell, Shukla, & Huang, 2017). For example, Black students are more likely to perceive their schools' climates and disciplinary practices as unsupportive and unfair (Konold et al., 2017). Furthermore, Marsh and Cornell (2001) found that how students experience and perceive their school environments contributes to racial differences in high-risk behaviors, such as fighting and possessing weapons at school. Marsh and Cornell concluded that Black students were more likely than their White peers to exhibit high-risk behaviors because they did not feel supported by their adults and peers or felt more threatened by violence at school.

The findings by Marsh and Cornell (2001) align with those of Gregory and Weinstein (2008), who noted that Black students were more likely to exhibit behaviors, such as defiance, with the teachers whom they believed untrustworthy or who overused their authority. In addition to feeling supported and trusted by adults, Shirley and Cornell (2012) identified willingness to seek help and attitudes toward aggression as two additional school climate factors contributing to how Black students behaved in school. Black students were less likely to seek help from adults and teachers because they did not believe their teachers would help them. The unwillingness to seek help because of a lack of trust in adults could increase resentment and misbehavior. According to Gregory and Weinstein, Black students are more likely to accept and trust the adults whom they respect and believe have their best interests in mind.

Shirley and Cornell (2012) found that Black students were more likely to report that their peers supported and encouraged aggressive behaviors. According to Shirley and Cornell, the students who encourage aggressive behavior are more likely to face disciplinary consequences. The Black students in their study were less likely to seek help from the adults and sought to handle difficult situations on their own by acting aggressively.

Racial disparities in school discipline are often the result of the school environment (Skiba & Williams, 2014). Numerous factors contribute to school climate each having different influences and impacts on a student based on the student's perceptions (Gregory, Cornell, & Fan, 2011). Racial disparities in a student's sense of belonging at school are moderators for racial disparities in disciplinary consequences (Fisher, Dawson, Higgins, & Swartz, 2020). Therefore, how a student perceives the school climate could indicate the student's behavior and engagement with others within that environment (Shirley & Cornell, 2011).

Student Perception

A student's race can impact the overall school experience (Skiba, Horner, et al., 2011). Black students are more likely than their White peers to report the overall school experiences as negative (Shirley & Cornell, 2012), perceive discrimination and inequality from school authorities, and describe their schools as unsafe and violent. (Ruck & Wortley, 2002). Kulkarni (2017) sought to learn more about students' perceptions and experiences with discipline at school and understand school discipline through a cultural lens. Kulkarni researched an inner-city, tuition-free, public, independent, charter high school in Center City, Philadelphia, between 2012 and 2015. The researcher conducted interviews and focus groups to examine perceptions of discipline at a school with a mostly White staff and a majority of students of color from low-income, violent neighborhoods. Kulkarni found that many Black students believed their educators arbitrarily assigned consequences. The students also felt that Black students were more likely to get suspended than their White peers. According to the students, the staff members lacked an understanding of the students' socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, affecting how they interpreted student behaviors. The lack of understanding, combined with the inability to discipline students effectively, resulted in inconsistent expectations and outcomes, which led to more student conduct and behavior issues. Similarly, Sheets (2002) found that students of color sometimes felt that their disciplinary consequences resulted from discriminatory interactions with adults at their school. Sheets also found that minority students believed that teachers less accepting of their culture and beliefs were more likely to administer consequences for interactions the students identified as cultural, such as talking loudly.

Many Black students believe that their teachers' expectations and behaviors differ when interacting with students of different races and ethnic backgrounds (Gregory & Thompson,

2010). The findings by Pena-Shaff, Bessette-Symons, Tate, and Fingerhut (2019) align with those by Gregory and Thompson (2010), who discovered that Black students felt their racial group received more negative treatment than other racial groups. Gregory and Thompson studied 1,444 students from three urban high schools in Central New York by administering an anonymous questionnaire about school disciplinary practices (Gregory & Thompson, 2010). The students reported that they received different treatment from teachers and suspension practices based on race; as a result, the Black students were more likely to have negative perceptions of their treatment than students of other races. The students who identified as Black were also more likely to report that their teachers treated students differently based on race. Additionally, the Black students reported that students of their racial group were more likely to get suspended than their White and Asian peers. These studies have shown the impact of Black students' perceptions of treatment as a microsystem. Black students who feel supported and accepted by the adults around them are more likely to have fewer disciplinary infractions and feel more successful academically (Tucker, Dixon, & Griddine, 2010).

Student Mental Health

Several factors have both negative and positive relationships with Black students' mental health and behavior, including school climate (Suldo et al., 2012), perceived support from school staff (Plenty, Östberg, Almquist, Augustine, & Modin, 2014), perceived racial discrimination (Coker et al., 2009), and peer relationships (Suldo, Gelley, Roth, & Bateman, 2015). There is a need to understand the relationship between school and students' mental health, as mental health may impact how students feel, behave, and perceive their academic environments (Suldo et al., 2012). Mental health consists of internalizing and externalizing behaviors. Internalizing behaviors consist of feelings of anxiety, depression, loneliness, and sadness (Messenger et al.,

2017). Externalizing behaviors include acting aggressively, fighting, stealing, yelling, achieving poorly academically, and having low peer acceptance. Understanding the relationship between the school environment and student mental health could contribute to creating an environment with minimal negative internalizing and externalizing behaviors (Suldo et al., 2012).

Additionally, Skiba (2000) found that Black students with emotional and behavioral disabilities received higher suspension rates than students without behavioral or emotional disabilities. Similarly, Valdez, Lambert, and Ialongo (2011) found that Black elementary school students who struggled academically and exhibited negative internalizing and externalizing behaviors received more disciplinary consequences, had a greater likelihood of academically underperforming, and had a higher likelihood of using mental health services in high school.

Students with mental health issues are more likely to perceive their schools as negative places and exhibit more internalizing and externalizing behaviors (Hurd, Hussain, & Bradshaw, 2018). Black students are apt to have negative feelings about their schools and feel discriminated against by their teachers (Coker et al., 2009). However, Black students with strong support networks that included family members, friends, and school administrators exhibit less internalizing and externalizing behaviors and have higher academic achievement (Mushonga & Henneberger, 2019).

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement, or how much parents get involved in their children's lives inside and outside of school, impacts student behavior (Suldo et al., 2012). Children with parents who engage in positive parenting practices, such as active relationship-building, rule-setting, and involvement in children's friendships, are more likely to engage in positive behaviors in the future (O'Donnell et al., 2008). Black parents tend to have authoritarian disciplinary parenting

styles that include punitive consequences (Pearl, French, Dumas, Moreland, & Prinz, 2014). Children with authoritarian parents are more likely to exhibit externalized behavior problems, including yelling, disobeying, and exhibiting physical aggression in school (Lansford et al., 2011).

Parental involvement has implications for how a child behaves. Parents who get involved in their children's education positively impact their children's academic success. Wang and Sheikh (2014) found that parental involvement correlated with improved academic and emotional functioning among adolescents. Parental involvement was also a predictor of a child's academic success, mental health, and behavioral and emotional engagement in school. Oram, Ryan, Rogers, and Heath (2017) explored the connection between emotional engagement, parental involvement, and perceptions of academic success and found that the students with weaker emotion regulation reported lower success at school and perceived their parents' controlling parenting style as unfavorable. In general, parental involvement as a microsystem can have both positive and negative effects on Black children's behaviors (Hayes, 2012), mental health (Miller, Wakefield, & Sani, 2015), and overall perceptions of academic achievement (Jeynes, 2016). Such positive and negative impacts also have indirect effects on the disciplinary outcomes for this student population.

A child's microsystem contains the factors closest to the child. Therefore, the microsystem has a direct relationship with how a child develops, behaves, and perceives the world. The microsystem and the other systems in Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory are factors with positive or negative relationships with the discipline gap for Black students.

Summary

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory suggests that several environments have indirect and direct impacts on the disproportionate use of discipline for Black students in urban settings. The exosystem factors that contribute to the discipline gap for Black students include the school-to-prison pipeline and cultural biases. The school-to-prison pipeline indicates that educators discipline students in ways similar to the criminal justice system, providing an overarching view of how educators view their roles in creating a culture in which Black students receive constant penalization. Punitive discipline causes students to have limited opportunities to advance academically (Losen & Martinez, 2013). In turn, constant penalization could cause Black students to have more encounters with the criminal justice system (Nicholson-Crotty et al., 2009).

Cultural biases are a macrosystem factor that contributes to the school-to-prison-pipeline. The majority of teachers in urban schools are White and use their cultural norms as a basis for judging student behaviors (Staats, 2014). Therefore, a lack of understanding about students' cultural norms and beliefs could cause teachers to misinterpret learners' actions (McGrady & Reynolds, 2013). Teachers who misconstrue student behavior could inappropriately administer disciplinary consequences (Gregory & Mosely, 2004). Gathering more information about the biases of school personnel toward different student populations could be a means of understanding how and why school staff members interpret student behaviors in certain ways and administer consequences based on their biases. Each system contributes to the discipline gap for Black students.

The needs assessment in this study was the means used to explore the microsystem factors closest to children, including teachers' and administrators' beliefs and attitudes about

discipline and student behavior. The needs assessment also addressed how educators practice and enforce discipline inside and outside the classroom. The goal of this study was to understand principals' and teachers' views of discipline and student behavior. Understanding these views was the means used to understand how the participants expressed these beliefs and attitudes in their interactions with students, how they perceived the disciplinary policies at their schools, and how they distributed consequences to students.

Chapter 2

Needs Assessments and Initial Findings

The previous chapter presented the factors contributing to the disproportionate rate of disciplinary actions for Black students in urban settings. Chapter 2 includes the findings from a needs assessment of school personnel's perceptions of school disciplinary practices. DS, an urban high school in a large city on the Northeast U.S. coast, has a predominantly Black and Latino student population. The high school has a track record of disciplinary consequences, including detention, out-of-class removal, in-school suspension, and out-of-school suspension, for Black students who commit repeated nonweapon, nondrug offenses. As of June 2018, the school has had a total of 264 total suspension days. Of these suspensions, 66 were given to students with disabilities and 55 to English language learners. In terms of gender, 127 suspensions were given to male students, 137 to female students. Additionally, when it comes to race, 177 suspensions were given to Black students, and 69 to Hispanic students. In the 2017–2018 school year, the school received a rating of 19 out of 100 district schools with the highest disciplinary rates. The discipline rate for Black students at DS is 40.14%.

Context of the Study

The needs assessment occurred in an urban charter high school in a large city on the Northeast coast with 245 students in Grades 9–12. As of the 2017-2018 school year, DS had a 45.9% staff retention rate and a 31% student retention rate. Additionally in 2017-2018, DS also had a current dropout rate of 2.2% and a graduation rate of 71.2%. In 2017–2018, the school had 48 personnel members (31 female and 17 male) of whom 32 identified as White, 10 as Black, three as Asian, and three as Hispanic.

DS's 2017–2018 student race and ethnicity statistics were 67.8% Black, 26.9% Hispanic, 2.4% Asian, 1.6% White, and 1.2% multi-race non-Hispanic. Of the student population, 40% did not speak English as their first language, 22% were English language learners, 24.5% were students with disabilities, 80% were high-needs students, and 55.9% were economically disadvantaged students. According to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for this state, 58 students received disciplinary action during the 2017–2018 school year, which consisted of in-school and out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, alternate settings, and emergency removals. Of these 68 students, 45 were Black, 11 were Hispanic, and two did not identify. Of the 58 disciplined students, 34 identified as male, and 34 identified as female.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the factors contributing to the disproportionate discipline rates for Black students in urban settings. The needs assessment addressed the use of exclusionary consequences, disciplinary practices, zero-tolerance policies, and other factors related to school administrators' beliefs, attitudes, and decision-making and teachers' attitudes and beliefs about discipline at school. This study had a convergent-parallel mixed methods approach.

Research Questions

The following research questions were the means used to understand the factors that contribute to the discipline gap for Black students in urban settings:

1. How do disciplinary actions differ when applied to Black students versus non-Black students?
2. What are school personnel's perceptions of student misbehavior?
3. What are school personnel's beliefs about the role of disciplinary practices in school?

Method

The following section presents the study's research design. This section includes a description of the research design, the participants, and the method of recruitment.

Research Design

The needs assessment had a convergent mixed methods design (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). The goal of the needs assessment was to investigate the research questions and the factors that contribute to the study's problem. Interviews and surveys commenced during the needs assessment.

Participants

The study's participants were school-based administrators, classroom teachers, and school support staff members. Convenience sampling occurred to ask all 48 school staff members to participate in the survey (see Pettus-Davis, Grady, Cuddeback, & Scheyett, 2011), with 20 ultimately taking part. Table 2.1 presents the demographics of the 20 staff members who completed the survey.

The study had a population appropriate for examining the problem of practice because the participants provided multiple perspectives. For example, the school support staff members offered their views as individuals who lacked direct involvement in discipline decisions but interacted with the students daily. The school-based administrators (i.e., principal, dean of students, and director of special education) oversaw the school structure and order. The teachers gave their perspectives as the direct instructors of the students. A limitation of this population is that the study did not include the students' views, and disciplinary policies and procedures primarily impact students.

Table 2.1

Participant Demographics

	<i>N</i>	%
Gender		
Male	5	25
Female	14	70
Prefer not to disclose	1	5
Role at the school		
School administrator	6	30
Classroom teacher	11	55
Nonteaching staff	2	10
Network-based staff	1	5
Race		
White	18	90
Black	1	5
Latino/Latina	1	5
Grades taught		
9th	15	75
10th	19	95
11th	17	85
12th	16	80
Years of experience in the role (including experience in other places)		
0–1 year	1	5
2–3 years	9	45
4–6 years	5	25
7–10 years	3	15
11–15 years	1	5
More than 15 years	1	5
Years working in specific context		
0–1 year	5	25
2–3 years	8	40
4–6 years	6	30
7–10 years	1	5
11–15 years		
More than 15 years		

Note. *N* = 20.

Participant recruitment. The potential participants received an e-mail that presented the study's purpose. The e-mail invitation indicated how the educators could contribute to research on disciplinary practices in urban schools. The invitation presented the voluntary nature of participation and the ability to withdraw at any time. There was a link to the survey, which included a consent form and a reminder that they could withdraw at any time.

Some participants also received a request to participate in interviews. Five school administrators, including the principal, three deans, and the director of special education were invitees because they had critical roles in the school's disciplinary process. Specifically, the dean was one of the key decision-makers for student behavior consequences; the director of special education made decisions for the special education population at the school; and the principal had the final say for suspensions or expulsions. Three out of the five invitees decided to participate in the interviews.

A possible power dynamic could have existed between the participants and the researcher, who was the school's vice-principal. Therefore, the interviews occurred in a common area of the school and not in the researcher's or participants' offices. The participants had the study details and the terms of their consent explained to them, with an opportunity to ask questions. The participants consented to voice-recording their interviews to ensure they received the researcher's undivided attention. Although the recordings would undergo transcription, the study findings and presentation would not include their recorded voices. In total, the sample size for both the survey and the interviews was 20 school personnel.

Instrumentation

The purpose of this study was to investigate three constructs: disciplinary practices, perceptions of student misbehaviors, and beliefs about the role of disciplinary practices.

Disciplinary practices are the formal and informal practices educators use to maintain order and structure (Kulkarni, 2017). Perceptions of student misbehavior are how individuals understand or interpret student behavior based on their beliefs (McCready, & Soloway, 2010). Finally, beliefs about the role of disciplinary practices in schools consist of the ideas a person accepts as truth for discipline in schools (Eisenhart, Shrum, Harding, & Cuthbert, 1988).

A mixed methods design was appropriate to guide the data collection on the study's problem and contributing factors. The participants completed a survey about their beliefs about disciplinary practices at the school. Interviews occurred with the participating school administrators on how they practiced discretion when giving disciplinary consequences, their beliefs about the school's disciplinary policies, and the factors they considered when providing disciplinary consequences.

Disciplinary Practices Survey

Skiba, Simmons, et al. (2003) created the Disciplinary Practice Scale to examine principals' beliefs and practices of discipline at their schools. According to Skiba et al., the survey is more than a measure of the frequency of disciplinary infractions. The survey also provides insight into the goals, processes, and results related to school discipline.

Although Skiba, Simmons, et al. (2003) focused on principals' insight, the needs assessment in this study included the staff members at DS. The survey underwent modification to address the participants' roles in the discipline process. For example, one item for school administrators was, "Although it would be nice to get to know students on an individual basis, especially those who need help, my duties as an administrator simply don't allow me the time" (Skiba, Simmons, et al., 2003, p. 46). The modified item was, "Although it would be nice to get

to know students on an individual basis, especially those who need help, my duties within my role don't allow me the time.”

A cognitive interview is a method of studying how participants understand, process, and respond to survey questions (Desimone & Le Floch, 2004). Cognitive interviews occurred with two teachers and two administrators to increase the validity of the question. Another change was the removal of the following statement: “Regardless of the severity of a student’s behavior, my objective as a principal is to keep all students in school” (Skiba, Simmons, et al., 2003, p. 51). The statement focused on the decision-making of school administrators; therefore, it was not needed in the scale.

The modified survey included 48 items on the eight subscales of general attitude about discipline, zero-tolerance policies, expulsions and suspensions, handling student misbehavior, resources for handling discipline, enforcement of discipline policies, discipline for students with disabilities, and remedies for preventing the use of exclusionary consequences. The seven subscales were the means to identify the participants’ beliefs about the different aspects of disciplinary practices in their context. Table 2.2 shows the various subscales, the number of items per subscale, and an example of a statement within each subscale.

The participants responded to each survey item on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. The modified Disciplinary Practices Survey used to gather data on the staff members’ perceptions of the seven factors provided the data used to identify how participants’ beliefs, attitudes, and opinions affected how they reported and interpreted student misbehaviors. The survey also provided insight into the disciplinary practices that the staff members viewed as beneficial or detrimental to the school and the students, information used to answer the three research questions. Further exploration of the participants’

goals and motivations occurred through qualitative interviews with a subsample of the staff. The following section presents the process and protocol for this instrumentation.

Table 2.2

Subscales from Disciplinary Practices Survey

Subscales	# of items	Example of items in scale
General attitude about discipline	9	The primary purpose of discipline is to teach appropriate skills to the disciplined student
Zero-tolerance policies, expulsion, and suspension	10	I believe suspension and expulsion allow students time away from school that encourages them to think about their behavior
Handling student misbehavior	4	The primary responsibility for teaching children how to behave appropriately in school belongs to parents
Enforcement of discipline policies	5	I believe students at my school are aware of school disciplinary policies
Discipline for students with disabilities	3	Teachers at this school were for the most part adequately trained by their teacher-training program to handle problems of misbehavior and discipline

Note. Adapted from Skiba et al., 2003

Semistructured School Administrator Interview

The survey was the means used to gather the participants' views, perceptions, and beliefs about disciplinary practices within their context. Subsequently, the interviews provided the opportunity to explore the decision-making process for disciplinary consequences for students at the school. Findlay (2015) created a semistructured interview protocol (see Appendix A) for understanding the values and factors that school administrators consider when making disciplinary decisions. Findlay sought to explore how principals exercised discretion within the legal parameters of a school's disciplinary policies. The 15 interview questions in this study addressed school administrators' views on the goals of discipline, how their roles contribute to disciplinary decisions, and how they exercise discretion when making discipline decisions. The

interview questions also elicited the principals' feelings about their obligations to enforce school disciplinary policies, what factors they consider when making disciplinary decisions, and if they feel hesitant to implement disciplinary policies.

The interviews in this study did not include questions about discretion due to the purpose of the needs assessment and the study's research questions. The interview protocol included eight of the 15 questions by Findlay (2015) having the most relevance to the research questions and the constructs under investigation. Additionally, one interview question underwent modification to include all school administrators. The original question was, "Please share your thoughts on the ways in which principals might appropriately exercise discretion regarding discipline in schools" (Findlay, 2015, p. 502). The modified item was, "Please share your thoughts on how school administrators might appropriately exercise discretion regarding discipline in schools." Of the eight questions used for the study, four addressed the participants' perceptions of student misbehavior, three addressed the role of discipline in schools, and all addressed the school's disciplinary practices.

Data Collection

Data collection for the survey and the interviews occurred in April 2019. All school staff members received e-mail invitations to participate and a link to a Google form to provide consent and take the survey. The participants had 2 weeks to complete the survey and received a reminder e-mail about the survey at the beginning of the second week allotted to take the interview. Of the 48 individuals invited to participate, 20 completed the survey, for a response rate of 42%.

The school administrators with active roles in the decision-making process for disciplinary actions received e-mail invitations to participate in interviews. The purpose of the

interviews was to understand the factors the administrators consider when making disciplinary decisions. Of the five school administrators invited to the interview, three participated. The interviews occurred in a shared space at the school, lasted approximately 25 minutes, and were recorded with voice-recording software.

Data Analysis

Data analysis commenced for the quantitative and qualitative data collected from the participants.

Quantitative analysis. The survey data were downloaded from Google Forms and uploaded into SPSS software. Descriptive statistics, including mean and mode, enabled analysis of the participants' responses to the Disciplinary Practices Survey (Skiba, Simmons, et al., 2003). Data analysis occurred to identify trends and patterns in the participants' beliefs about disciplinary practices. Analysis of the average responses for each item indicated trends in how the staff members viewed the school's disciplinary practices and the differences in their beliefs based on factors, such as years of experience working in that environment.

Qualitative analysis. Interviews occurred in person. Otter.ai, a mobile device transcription application, was the tool used to record and transcribe the interviews. The data underwent organization using an emergent coding process, with relational codes grouped into themes related to the constructs under analysis (see Saldaña, 2015). The study did not include predetermined salient themes; therefore, theme development occurred during the coding process. The data underwent deidentification before analysis.

Findings and Discussion

The survey and interviews were the instruments used to understand the participants' perspectives and beliefs about the needs of disciplinary practices within their context. Each

measure showed the disconnect between the beliefs and actual practices within the setting. The participants identified the current disciplinary practices as unsuccessful and noted the need for more resources to support alternatives to exclusionary practices. The survey results aligned with the interviews, as some of the decision-makers highlighted the need for inclusive disciplinary practices and professional development to understand and serve students from diverse backgrounds.

Survey

The survey provided valuable information about the teachers' beliefs of disciplinary practice and the role of discipline in urban schools. Table 2.3 presents the statements with the lowest and highest means and the top statements with which the participants either disagreed or agreed. The survey responses showed whether the participants' beliefs about the role of discipline in urban schools aligned with disciplinary practices at the school.

The participants expressed the overall belief that exclusionary consequences should not be the only method used to discipline students. The frequent use of exclusionary consequences harms Black students and presents them with challenges to their academic success and a sense of belonging (Bal, Afacan, & Cakir, 2018). The participants in this study reported that suspensions and expulsions should not be the answer to student misbehavior. However, they also felt that students who are not first-time offenders should receive more severe consequences. The participants also reported that the success and best interest of the school might require removing students who are troublemakers. The recommendation of student removal for the school's best interests aligned with the research that many school leaders consider removing the students they deem problematic or who struggle to follow school rules and expectations (Sbarra & Pianta,

2001). However, the participants in this study also acknowledged that suspensions and expulsions disproportionately affected the minority students at the school.

Table 2.3

Top Statements With Which Participants Did Not Agree

Statements	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	<i>SD</i>
Out-of-school suspension makes students less likely to misbehave in the future.	1	4	2.00	.918
I believe suspension and expulsion allow students time away from school that encourages them to think about their behavior.	1	4	2.05	.759
Teachers at this school were, for the most part, adequately trained by their teacher-training program to handle problems of misbehavior and discipline.	1	4	2.10	.912
Although it would be nice to get to know students on an individual basis, especially those who need help, my duties in my school simply don't allow me the time.	1	5	2.30	1.342
Suspensions and expulsions hurt students by removing them from academic learning time.	3	5	4.35	.587
I believe that putting in place prevention programs (e.g., bullying programs, conflict resolution, improved classroom management) can reduce the need for suspension and expulsion.	4	5	4.35	.489
Conversations with students referred to the office are important and should be factored into most decisions about disciplinary consequences.	3	5	4.35	.671
Suspension and expulsion do not really solve discipline problems.	3	5	4.40	.681

Note. *N* = 20.

Of the survey respondents, 95% did not consider zero-tolerance policies and exclusionary consequences as effective. Additionally, 75% of the participants felt that they lacked the training needed to deal with student misbehaviors. Also, 70% of the participants believed that the school needed more resources for creating alternative ways of dealing with problem behaviors. Many urban schools lack the necessary resources and training that teachers need to work with students from diverse backgrounds (Allen & White-Smith, 2014). In this study, 100% of the participants believed the school needed prevention programs to reduce suspension rates, which aligned with the literature.

Overall, many of the participants did not find the exclusionary consequences helpful. However, they reported a lack of training and resources to pursue other ways of dealing with student behavior. Comparison of the data did not occur based on gender or race, as 70% of the participants were women and 90% were White. This finding aligned with the research showing that most teachers in urban settings identify as White women (Staats, 2014). Therefore, the needs assessment results were not generalizable to the larger population in the district due to the small sample size.

Interview

Three key stakeholders active in the school's disciplinary practices participated in individual interviews: the school principal, dean of students, and director of special education. The information gathered from the interviews supplemented the survey data and provided insight into the administrators' perspectives of their roles in disciplining students in their context. Several key themes emerged from these interviews: (a) the need for more training for culturally responsive practices, (b) more resources to support alternative interventions, and (c) the ineffectiveness of the current disciplinary practices for managing student misbehavior.

All three interviewees described the ineffectiveness of the school's disciplinary practices. The dean and director of special education identified the discipline at the school as extremely punitive, with no room for restorative practices. On the other hand, the principal believed that the school had some positive ways of dealing with behavior, such as merits and a school-based incentive system for students to earn school cash for quarterly raffles. However, the positive methods were not consistent parts of the school's culture. Many school administrators feel restricted in their options for addressing student misbehavior due to limited resources (Okonofua & Eberhardt, 2015); these limitations may result in the overuse of exclusionary consequences (Kennedy, Murphy, & Jordan, 2017).

Another theme that emerged in this study was the need for more resources to address the negative disciplinary trends at the school. The principal noted that her superiors did not provide her with the resources needed to create an effective disciplinary system, stating, "My higher-ups do not even have the resources to support [the school]." When asked to explain, she stated that "there wasn't a lot of money that could support us in seeking additional support and resources."

The director of special education (director) and the dean discussed the need for professional development for staff members to understand student behavior and deal with problems within their context. The dean highlighted the importance of "understanding the backstory of why students behave the way they do" and "thinking about different ways of dealing with student behavior in the classroom rather than kicking them out of the classroom." In comparison, the director stated, "I am not sure that the school has enough supports in place to make discipline procedures and practices more of a learning process and less of a punitive one."

The dean and director emphasized the need for professional development and training as they discussed how teachers interacted with the students. Teachers hold beliefs and attitudes that

indicate how they think, behave, and perceive situations in academic settings (Scott et al., 2019). The dean and the director noted that the teachers sometimes lacked cultural sensitivity. The dean described what often occurred when students got sent to the office: “The teacher would say one thing, but the student would say another.” When asked for an example, she stated, “Sometimes, teachers would send kids to the office for being disruptive, but the kid would come in hyped up and upset because they thought it was unfair that the teacher kicked them out for being loud when that was just the way they talked.”

Similarly, the director shared that many students in the school had autism, which caused them to exhibit inappropriate behavior or swear. She explained that the teachers would assign these students to detention or send them out of the class instead of conversing with them or using that moment to teach them why they considered their behavior inappropriate.

Teachers with students of races different than their own can rely on stereotypes and misconceptions to generate beliefs about their students’ abilities (McGrady & Reynolds, 2013). A lack of cultural sensitivity could impact how teachers perceive student behaviors, indicating the need for cultural sensitivity training. In her interview, the director described how the existing system did not provide support for professional development. She stated that the educators’ responsibilities and demands did not leave the time needed to engage in cultural sensitivity professional development.

The participants discussed feeling obligated to enforce disciplinary policies in the school, even though the dean and director stated that they did not always agree with the policies. The participants described the behaviors leading to consequences like suspensions. The principal viewed suspension as necessary for serious behavioral infractions, such as fighting or possessing drugs and weapons. However, the dean deemed the suspensions an overused consequence for all

types of behaviors. When asked about the student behaviors that resulted in suspension, the dean stated, “Anything from skipping class to play fighting to being rude to a teacher to things [the students] do outside of school.”

The director and dean highlighted the need for the staff members to understand student behaviors to change the punitive practices at the school. The principal discussed supporting teachers and the overall disciplinary structures of the school but did not mention the students in most of her answers. When asked about how they perceived their roles in the discipline at the school, the director and dean described helping the students learn in some form. Conversely, the principal viewed her role as overseeing policies, creating structures, and modeling adult behaviors.

Another key finding of the interviews was that the school lacked a consistent idea of the role of discipline. The participants viewed the role of discipline differently, and their different perceptions affected how they perceived policies and engaged in decision-making. The three main interview takeaways were the ineffectiveness of the existing disciplinary system, insufficient resources to support a different system, and the need for professional development to support the staff members working daily with the students.

Summary

The survey and interview participants did not find the exclusionary consequences beneficial for students. The participants felt that they lacked the preparation or training needed to work in their context and deal with student behavior. The interviews aligned with the findings from the survey and showed the several factors that school administrators consider when making disciplinary decisions. The interview findings suggest that the school administrators who work directly with students have more awareness of the direct impact of disciplinary policies on the

students. However, those who do not have direct contact with students daily see the impact of the disciplinary policies on the school as a whole. Both the survey and interview participants described the disciplinary policies at the school as punitive and indicated the need for proactive strategies to address school culture and student behavior.

The factors discussed in Chapter 1 and the key findings from the needs assessment in this chapter showed that exclusionary practices have negative impacts on Black students (Flynn, Lissy, Alicea, Tazartes, & McKay, 2016). Furthermore, teachers who have cultural backgrounds different from their students could misinterpret student behaviors (Staats, 2014). The findings from the needs assessment in this study showed the disconnect between how teachers interpret student behavior and how they address those behaviors. For this reason, schools must provide support, coaching, and professional learning opportunities for educators in schools with multiculturally diverse students. Chapter 3 presents the culturally responsive ways that educators can work with and support diverse students. The chapter also presents the schoolwide and classroom-specific practices educators can use to increase their knowledge of different practices to address student needs.

Chapter 3

Intervention Literature Review

The disproportionate discipline rate between Black and White students is a significant racial equity issue in the U.S. education system (LaForett & Marco, 2019). Discipline disparities for Black students begin in early childhood education and continue throughout high school (Gregory & Skiba, 2019). The USDoe (2014) Office of Civil Rights suggested that the continued use of exclusionary consequences (e.g., suspension and expulsion) has contributed to the discipline gap for Black students over time. Nationally, 5% of White boys and 2% of White girls receive one or more out-of-school suspensions, compared to 18% of Black boys and 10% of Black girls (Gopalan & Nelson, 2019). Scholars have identified exclusionary consequences as ineffective and damaging for Black students (Flynn, Lissy, Alicea, Tazartes, & McKay, 2016). Furthermore, exclusionary discipline for Black students correlates with an increased risk of dropout and future engagement with the juvenile justice system (Losen, 2013). The findings from these empirical studies aligned with the findings of the needs assessment in this study.

As indicated in Chapter 2, a needs assessment occurred at an urban charter high school in Massachusetts. The participants reported that exclusionary consequences did not effectively address student behavior and that the school lacked the resources needed for alternative approaches. Moreover, the participants did not feel prepared or trained to manage student behaviors within their classrooms. Given the findings of the needs assessment, this chapter presents alternative interventions to addressing student behavior. Following a restatement of the guiding conceptual framework for the literature review for the intervention, the chapter addresses schoolwide, classroom, and teacher-related interventions. There is a discussion of professional development and educator training as a potential intervention for addressing the study's problem.

Finally, the chapter concludes with a brief summary of the proposed intervention based on the literature.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

Studies have shown that positive interventions are means of reducing the schoolwide use of exclusionary practices (Chin et al., 2012). However, positive interventions do not address the discipline gap between Black and White students (Lustick, 2017). The discipline gap remains for Black students even in schools that provide positive interventions and reduce exclusionary practices (Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008). Positive interventions have not been an effective means of reducing the discipline gap because they do not address the needs of culturally diverse students (Lustick, 2017). A vast amount of research exists on the factors that contribute to the discipline gap for Black students (Bottiani, Larson, Debnam, Bischoff, & Bradshaw, 2017). However, few empirical studies have presented interventions directly tested to reduce this gap (Bottiani, Bradshaw, & Gregory, 2018). Furthermore, no single causal factor explains the discipline gap; thus, no single action is a means of reducing the gap (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010). Given all of this information, this chapter presents culturally responsive pedagogy as a conceptual framework for exploring interventions focused on the school microsystem to address the underlying factors contributing to the discipline gap for Black students.

Understanding a student's culture is a key component of helping students learn and interpret the world around them (Johnson, Anhalt, & Cowan, 2017). Culturally responsive pedagogy is an approach to teaching and learning that focuses on the importance of cultural references. The pedagogy indicates the need for educators to intentionally understand students' cultural experiences and backgrounds as critical components of how they learn (Samuels, 2018).

Educators who become culturally responsive promote students' engagement and achievement by using the diverse intersections of students' identities, cultural strengths, and lived experiences to promote their academic achievement (Gay, 2010).

Some school leaders have begun integrating culturally responsive approaches into their school-wide systems (Boneshefski & Runge, 2014), disciplinary practices (Bal et al., 2018; Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, & Curran, 2004), instructional practices (Samuels, 2018), and social-emotional curricula (Cressey, 2019). A culturally responsive framework correlates with positive student outcomes, especially for students of color. Educators with an increased understanding and awareness of the impact of culture on student achievement see higher student engagement (Bradshaw et al., 2018), fewer disciplinary referrals (Bal et al., 2018), and increased academic achievement (Bonner, Warren, & Jiang, 2018).

Culturally Responsive Schools

Research has shown that exclusionary ways of managing student behavior (e.g., detentions, suspensions, and expulsions) negatively affect student behaviors (Bal et al., 2018). Exclusionary practices also harm students' overall perceptions of their school (Osher et al., 2010). Researchers within the past 30 years have attempted to intervene and develop alternative ways of managing challenging student behavior by developing multitiered, proactive instructional strategies known as positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS; Smolkowski, Strycker, & Ward, 2016). The PBIS model has three tiers that indicate supports allocation, with increasing intensity (Feuerborn & Tyre, 2012). Tier 1, also known as universal supports, consists of the least-intrusive interventions for managing student behaviors and are the supports that schools provide to all students (Stanton-Chapman, Walker, Voorhees, & Snell, 2016). Tier 2 comprises targeted interventions for improving specific skill deficits based on a

specific student group (Feuerborn & Tyre, 2012). Students who need more intensive supports than those provided in Tiers 1 and 2 can receive more individualized supports in Tier 3. Tier 3 consists of the most time-consuming and resource-intensive supports, requiring an individualized approach to addressing student behavior (Smolkowski et al., 2016).

Educators who have used the PBIS model have seen decreased rates of disciplinary referrals and overall improvements in student behaviors (Freeman et al., 2016). However, Vincent, Swain-Bradway, Tobin, and May (2011) researched the relationship between PBIS implementation and the disciplinary exclusion of students from diverse backgrounds and noted that PBIS did not impact the racial disproportionality of disciplinary consequences. The researchers found an overrepresentation of Black students in exclusionary disciplinary practices, noting that disciplinary consequences increased in schools where educators implemented PBIS with fidelity. Such information and the increasing cultural diversity of public schools in the United States suggest that educators must adopt a culturally responsive approach to PBIS and disciplinary practices (Sugai, O’Keeffe, & Fallon, 2012; Vincent & Tobin, 2011).

Culturally responsive discipline system. Few empirical studies have focused on implementing culturally responsive positive behavior interventions and supports (CRPBIS; Bal et al., 2018). Many researchers have suggested different ways of implementing the CRPBIS model within schools (Better-Bubon, Brunner, & Kansteiner, 2016; Boneshefski & Runge, 2014; Johnson et al., 2017; Swain-Bradway, 2014); however, few have tested the strategies’ impact and significance. Therefore, CRPBIS are still relatively new topics within the research community (Vincent & Tobin, 2011).

Bal et al. (2018) sought to address the gap and meet the cultural needs of different schools by conducting a qualitative study during the 2013–2014 school year to assess a formative

intervention called the learning lab. A learning lab is a process in which local school stakeholders come together to develop a culturally responsive behavior support system based on the specific needs, resources, aspirations, and realities of their schools. The researchers strove to understand the actions that emerged from the learning lab implementation and how the stakeholders designed a culturally responsive discipline system.

Bal et al. (2018) used several qualitative data collection methods for triangulation, including observations, interviews, and artifact and video analysis. The learning lab consisted of 14 members—10 women and four men—who met for 11 sessions. Seven of the participants were school staff members, five were parents, one was a student, and one was a community member. The learning lab required seven key actions: questioning the current discipline system, analyzing key components of the system, modeling a culturally responsive discipline system, designing a culturally responsive discipline system, examining the newly designed culturally responsive discipline system, planning for the implementation of the new model, and reflecting on the learning lab process and projected outcomes.

Through this formative intervention, Bal et al. (2018) found that the learning lab enabled the participants to define cultural responsiveness within their context instead of assuming the school's needs. Additionally, the participants created a shared sense of purpose and collaboration and had diverse representation in creating the system. The learning lab was a way for the stakeholders to collaborate to create a culturally responsive discipline system. However, the lab had limitations as an intervention because the researchers did not provide data on the system's effectiveness after implementation and its impact on the disproportionate discipline rates for students of color.

Culturally responsive positive behavior intervention and support. Bal et al. (2018)

proposed a method for schools that lack alternatives to traditional discipline systems. Educators could use the method to begin thinking about a culturally responsive discipline system. Vincent, Randall, Cartledge, Tobin, and Swain-Bradway (2011) provided strategies for transforming a school's PBIS system into a culturally responsive system for student needs (see Figure 3.1).

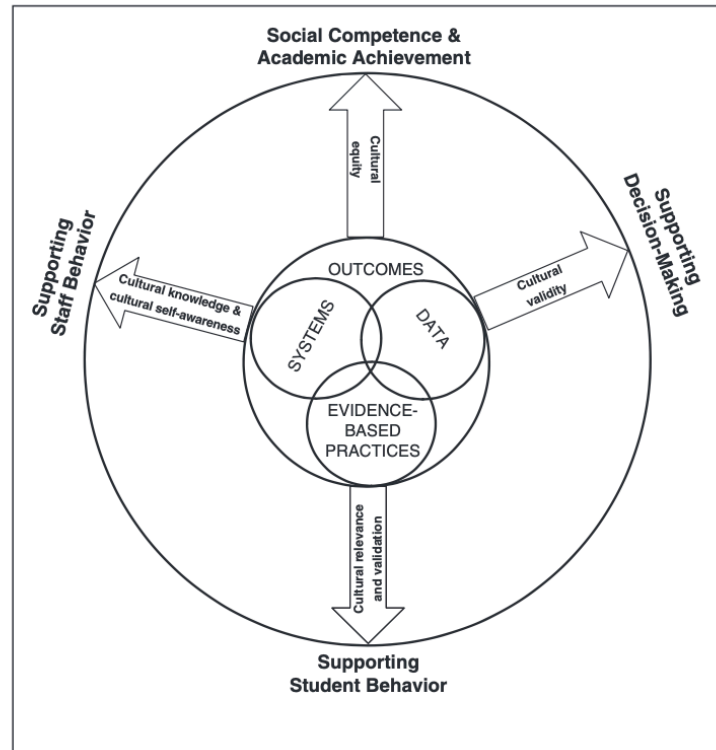


Figure 3.1. Framework for integrating school-wide positive behavior supports with culturally responsive practices. Adapted from “Toward a Conceptual Integration of Cultural Responsiveness and Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support,” by C. G. Vincent, C. Randall, G. Cartledge, T. J. Tobin, & J. Swain-Broadway, Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 13, 219–229. Copyright 2011 by Sage.

The model by Vincent, Randall, et al. (2011) presents the four key areas of a PBIS model for schools: supporting student behavior, supporting decision-making, supporting staff behavior, and social competence and academic achievement. The model shows how educators can use culturally responsive practices to achieve positive disciplinary outcomes for students of color.

Vincent et al. highlighted the need for teachers to support student behavior by engaging in classroom practices to validate and acknowledge students' varying cultural identities.

Vincent, Randall, et al. (2011) suggested supporting staff behavior with professional learning opportunities that enable staff members to engage in critical thinking about their cultural self-awareness and decision-making. The authors also found that schools have culturally responsive ways of understanding, interpreting, and collecting data. Understanding data in a culturally responsive way could include testing data collection methods to ensure validity for culturally diverse student populations and consistently examining discipline data by race for disproportionalities or biases in disciplinary decision-making.

In addition, Vincent, Randall, et al. (2011) endorsed Bal et al. (2018), who indicated the need to enhance the effectiveness and implementation of CRPBIS within a school with a variety of stakeholders (e.g., parents, students, and staff members) from culturally diverse backgrounds. Culturally responsive practices schoolwide enable consensus and collaboration among those affected by its implementation (Johnson et al., 2017). The following section presents how educators can use culturally responsive practices in the classroom to promote a more positive and enriching experience for students of color and dismantle the racial discipline gap.

Culturally Responsive Classrooms

There are many benefits when teachers engage in proactive and positive strategies for managing challenging student behaviors (Valente et al., 2018). Using proactive and positive strategies to manage student behaviors can reduce disruption (Pas et al., 2015), improve student engagement (Côté-Lussier & Fitzpatrick, 2016), and improve academic achievement (Aldrup, Klusmann, Lüdtke, Göllner, & Trautwein, 2018). However, research has shown that such strategies do not always address the behavioral needs of students from diverse backgrounds

(Monroe, 2009), thus negatively impacting the discipline gap between Black and White students (Vincent, Swain-Bradway, et al., 2011). This section presents culturally responsive classroom management (CRCM) and culturally responsive instruction as strategies that teachers can use to work with diverse student populations.

Culturally responsive classroom management. CRCM is a relatively new construct in research. However, the strategies and interventions within CRCM have their origins in culturally responsive pedagogy (Bondy, Ross, Gallingane, & Hambacher, 2007). CRCM consists of the strategies and tools that educators can use to manage a classroom of culturally diverse student learners (Siwatu, Putman, Starker-Glass, & Lewis, 2017). Weinstein et al. (2004) indicated the five essential components of effective CRCM for educators: recognition of one's ethnocentrism and biases; knowledge of students' cultural backgrounds; awareness of the broader social, economic, and political context; ability and willingness to use culturally appropriate management strategies; and commitment to building caring classroom communities. Educators who acknowledge these five components can understand the importance of creating comfortable environments for students, build and foster relationships, create and hold students to high expectations, and communicate in culturally responsive ways (Bondy et al., 2007; Brown, 2004; Milner & Tenore, 2010). Educators who engage in CRCM practices and recognize the underlying factors of students' behaviors are less likely to use exclusionary practices to address perceived student misbehaviors (Pane, Rocco, Miller, & Salmon, 2013).

Building strong relationships is a component of CRCM. Bondy et al. (2007) identified several key components in building relationships with students. One of the components is having students know their teachers on a personal level. Thus, teachers should allow students to know them as more than just their teachers. Strategies for supporting personal connections with

students include making connections within the lessons to personal experiences, conducting thought-provoking conversations and encouraging students to ask questions, and playing games that enable the students to learn about their teachers and classmates.

Brown (2004) also explored the need to build relationships and posited that educators must take time daily to provide each student with individualized attention to foster caring relationships and help students feel safe. Educators who build strong relationships with their students by understanding their cultures and backgrounds are more likely to look at student behavior differently and use proactive strategies to help students with challenging behaviors (Bondy et al., 2007). Students of color who have such teachers are less likely to misbehave because their teachers strive to reinforce positive behaviors and have a better understanding of each student's needs (Milner & Tenore, 2010). Teachers can create a comfortable environment for students by building caring relationships (Brown, 2004). Students should be able to view their classrooms as spaces where everyone receives support and is responsible for fostering a supportive environment for their peers.

Teachers who engage in CRCM understand teacher-student power dynamics (Milner & Tenore, 2010). A teacher participant in Brown's (2004) study counteracted the teacher-student power dynamic by establishing business-like learning environments where each student was an equally important contributor to teaching and learning. Another participant described treating all students with respect and providing them with leadership opportunities. This participant indicated that the students understood that disrespecting and isolating others was not an acceptable practice.

Promoting leadership opportunities for all students requires educators to view every student as capable and able to achieve success (Bondy et al., 2007; Brown, 2004). Teachers in

urban settings who work with predominately Black students often have deficit mindsets about their students' abilities (Gregory & Mosely, 2004). Educators with deficit mindsets believe that Black students, who often experience disadvantaged situations, cannot meet high expectations. As a result, these teachers do not challenge Black students or hold them to high standards (Hinojosa, 2008).

Teachers who have high expectations enable Black students to feel confident and excel academically (Gregory, Hafen, et al., 2016). Teachers in urban schools often base their student expectations on the culture and practices of White, middle-class individuals (Staats, 2014). However, establishing expectations for student behavior and communicating these expectations should occur in culturally responsive ways (Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, & Curran, 2004). Teachers who engage in CRCM set assertive, explicit, and clear academic and behavioral expectations based on their students' cultures and backgrounds (Bondy et al., 2007; Brown, 2004).

Educators must set high standards and expectations for all students. However, a participant in the study by Milner and Tenore (2010) indicated the need for equitable standards and expectations. The participant "rejected the one-size-fits-all approach" (p. 577) and created targeted expectations based on the specific and distinct needs of each student. Further, the participant pushed the students not to give up when they struggled, increasing learners' confidence in their abilities to complete assignments.

Educators can build relationships, create caring and safe environments, and set high expectations for culturally diverse students by communicating in culturally responsive ways (Weinstein et al., 2003). How teachers communicate with Black students impacts the quality of students' academic experiences (Gay, 2018). Several strategies exist for communicating

effectively with diverse student populations. Participants in a study by Bondy et al. (2007) used terms of endearment and humor, words and expressions familiar to the students, and straightforward directives to set clear expectations. The participants also incorporated pop culture relevant to the students.

Brown (2004) highlighted the importance of effective communication and found that the study participants established congruent communication processes. In other words, the participants established processes to hold students to high expectations and enable them to feel heard. Educators who understand and learn the various communication styles of students from diverse backgrounds are less likely to misinterpret their students' intentions, resulting in more positive teacher-student dynamics (Gay, 2010).

Culturally responsive teaching. Educators must ensure that all students receive a quality education, regardless of culture or background (Bonner, Warren, & Jiang, 2018). Culturally responsive teaching requires educators to become aware of their students' learning styles, provide ethnocentric instruction, create collaborative learning environments, engage in reflexive practices, and remain mindful of other cultures (Gay, 2010). This section focuses on student-centered learning, differentiated instruction, the activation of prior knowledge, and the inclusion of student culture as potential curriculum and instruction interventions for educating diverse learners.

Student-centered learning is an essential component of culturally responsive teaching. In student-centered learning, an educator centers on the strengths of the students during instructional delivery (Wachira & Mburu, 2017). Creating a culturally responsive, learner-centered environment requires educators to become aware of how students learn. Educators must create lessons by considering the cultures and languages of their students.

Samuels (2018) studied teachers' perspectives of the challenges and advantages of culturally responsive teaching and found that educators frequently encouraged students to take the lead in lessons. The educators fostered this environment by intentionally providing opportunities to engage in dialogue and discussions of real-world experiences, cultural influences, and current events. The teachers also facilitated student-led conversations with open-ended questions, accountable talk, and turn-and-talks. Students in culturally diverse learning environments should be valued within their academic environments (Farinde-Wu, Glover, & Williams, 2017).

Several benefits exist for teachers who foster culturally responsive learning environments. Teachers who value and consider students' perspectives are less likely to have disciplinary issues in their classrooms (Hambacher, 2018). Hambacher (2018) studied urban educators who engaged in culturally responsive teaching and found that one teacher went out of the way to make students feel valued and heard. The teacher often asked the students for feedback on lessons and used that feedback to make instructional decisions. The teacher facilitated student ownership in the classroom by allowing the students to propose alternative readings to lessons aligned with the learning goals. The teacher also established a shared language of goals and expectations created by the students.

Culturally responsive teaching requires educators to learn from their students (Bergeron, 2008), allowing students to bring parts of themselves to the lessons so that they feel empowered to achieve academic success (Farinde-Wu et al., 2017). Educators hold students to high expectations by enabling them to drive the work in lessons (Hinojosa, 2008). Teachers can also set high expectations by creating environments where students can learn from their peers and how different experiences contribute to how others think and perceive the world (Brown, 2004).

Educators who engage in differentiated instruction vary their lessons with different techniques, activities, and practices (Woodley, Hernandez, Parra, & Negash, 2017). Activating prior knowledge is a process through which students can connect the lesson to prior experiences, lessons, or activities (Bonner et al., 2018). Educators in a culturally responsive classroom use a variety of activities to support the needs and learning styles of diverse students (Gay, 2002). Differentiated instruction enables educators to make lessons relevant to students' real-world experiences (Farinde-Wu et al., 2017). Samuels (2018) found that culturally responsive educators scaffolded their content and modeled how to connect the lesson to prior knowledge to create spaces where the students felt confident and comfortable sharing their experiences and engaging in thought-provoking learning. The educators highlighted the importance of embracing differentiated instruction with student choice. Samuels found that the educators used different strategies to engage in these two practices: diverse groupings for different presentation styles on assignments and differentiation of content delivery.

Bonner et al. (2018) also identified the importance of differentiated instruction within culturally responsive classrooms. Bonner et al. found that educators created lessons that included examples of all the different cultures of the students within their class. The educators included the students' various cultures in their lessons to normalize and celebrate cultural differences. The teachers also found value in activating students' prior knowledge, encouraging the students to take what they had learned and relate it to their cultures, histories, and languages. Students can make meaning of new content when they can integrate the content into their prior knowledge (Wachira & Mburu, 2017). Therefore, educators must understand and familiarize themselves with students' existing knowledge and cultural skills (Gay, 2010).

Culturally responsive teachers not only know their students' academic strengths and weaknesses, but know about their students' backgrounds, cultures, and values (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Culturally responsive educators leverage this knowledge, engage students, and build upon their cultural strengths by helping them understand lessons from a different perspective (Gay, 2002). The goal of multicultural content is to help students appreciate and understand other cultures (Farinde-Wu et al., 2017). Farinde-Wu et al. (2017) found that educators engaged in critical literacy-based instruction by intentionally selecting multicultural texts reflective of their students' backgrounds that did not present negative stereotypes. This strategy enabled the students to position themselves in the texts for increased engagement in the lessons.

Bonner et al. (2018) observed participants who utilized parents and community members as a means of including students' cultures into the classroom. The participants held discussions and invited parents, community members, and family members into the classroom to share their cultures, experiences, and backgrounds. The participating instructors ultimately found ways to integrate this information into the curriculum. The educators regularly included their students' cultures through activities such as celebrating holidays from different cultures, learning words from the students' different languages, and creating spaces for students to share cultural events and stories. Teachers should engage in reflective practices to consistently analyze their curriculum and find resources and activities that reflect their student populations (Samuels, 2018).

Engaging in CRCM practices could enable educators to understand and build relationships with their students. Teachers with culturally responsive approaches to classroom management and teaching are more likely to create learning environments where students feel accepted and supported as integral components of the classroom (Ullucci, 2009). Understanding

and incorporating culture into teaching and learning practices is a way to create a positive and caring environment in which Black students can succeed academically and behaviorally (Monroe, 2009). Educators can increase their knowledge of culturally responsive classroom practices with training and supports that enable them to feel successful, confident, and capable of teaching in culturally diverse classrooms (Gay, 2002).

Teacher Preparation and Support

Educators who teach culturally diverse student populations must understand the needs of diverse student learners (Gay, 2010). Educators who engage in culturally responsive practices improve equity and access to success within their classrooms. However, gaining the skills needed to support culturally diverse student learners can be challenging for educators with backgrounds different from their students (Averill, Anderson, & Drake, 2015). Educators require support to build the skills needed for teaching students from culturally diverse communities successfully. Organizations must provide supports so that educators can foster their continuous development and grow in culturally responsive practices (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). This section presents all-staff workshops, individualized coaching, and professional learning communities (PLCs) as interventions that educators can use to develop culturally responsive instructional practices.

All Staff Professional Development

All-staff professional development is a strategy for training employees on shared organizational practices (Zepeda, 2019). Schools and nonprofit educational organizations provide all-staff professional development so that educators can develop a shared understanding of culturally responsive practices within the organization (McCormick, Eick, & Womack, 2013).

All-staff professional development consists of focused workshops and conferences (Sparks, 2002).

McKoy, MacLeod, Walter, and Nolker (2017) investigated the impact of a 5-day in-service training workshop. The workshop's purpose was to increase teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of culturally responsive teaching practices. The researchers gathered pre- and postsurvey data of the participants' perceptions of familiarity, comfort level, effectiveness, and concerns with culturally responsive teaching practices. In addition, the researchers asked the participants about the culturally responsive practices they used in their classrooms and if they had a different understanding of culturally responsive teaching after the workshop. McKoy et al. found a statistically significant difference in the participants' perceptions of the familiarity and importance of culturally responsive teaching after the workshop. However, no statistically significant difference emerged in the participants' frequency of use, comfort of use, and concerns about culturally responsive practices. Therefore, although the workshop was a helpful means of increasing teachers' knowledge of culturally responsive practices, it did not cause them to change how they used these practices in their classrooms.

McKoy et al. (2017) focused on understanding the impact of a professional development workshop on in-service educators' perceptions of culturally responsive teaching. Similarly, Smith, Ralston, and Waggoner (2018) explored the impact of a culturally responsive practices workshop on how preservice teachers conceptualized and applied culturally responsive practices in different case study scenarios. Smith et al. found that the workshop enabled the preservice teachers to develop culturally responsive strategies that directly aligned with the information presented in the workshop. Additionally, the participants devised new and innovative ways to implement culturally responsive practices. However, even though the workshop provided the

participants with the opportunity to generate ideas aligned with the workshop's material, the researchers noted a "lack of true classroom implementation" (Smith et al., 2018, p. 71). The researchers did not measure the effectiveness of the workshop on the participants' use of culturally responsive classroom practices in their actual classrooms.

All-staff professional developments allow staff members to develop a shared language, meaning, and expectations of culturally responsive teaching and classroom management in an organization. However, all-staff professional development opportunities have not been successful means of helping educators incorporate what they have learned into their daily practices (Knight, 2009). All-staff professional development lacks success with daily practice because it includes the assumption that all educators need the same support. Additionally, the professional development does not address the individual learning and teaching style of each educator (Reinke et al., 2014). Therefore, educators must also receive individualized coaching to develop culturally responsive practices so they can consider both their instructional practices and their students' needs within their context (Teemant, Wink, & Tyra, 2011).

Individualized Coaching

Individualized coaching enables educators to practice incorporating what they have learned in all-staff professional development with their instructional style (Knight, 2009). Coaching has emerged in the literature as an effective intervention because it is a teacher-directed, collaborative process grounded in continuous improvement with a central goal of improving educator effectiveness for improved student outcomes (Zepeda, 2019). All-staff professional development provides coaching so that leaders can support and hold educators accountable for using certain practices in their classrooms (Teemant et al., 2011). However, despite many school leaders understanding the need for reform and change in practice, they

rarely establish structures to help educators implement the changes and practices taught or discussed (Brezicha, Bergmark, & Mitra, 2015). Sustainable change requires a variety of supports so that teachers can continuously improve their practices (Learning Forward, 2011).

Those responsible for enacting professional learning should set clear goals, high expectations, and clear criteria for success aligned with the targeted organizational outcomes (Learning Forward, 2011). Coaches share their expertise and evidence-based practices that align with the needs of the educators with whom they work (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017). Coaches are professional learning leaders who can develop and create professional learning targets and assess educators' progress toward those learning goals (Jensen, Sonnemann, Roberts-Hull, & Hunter, 2016). Coaches should promote teacher agency by allowing educators to purposefully direct and steer the coaching to address their individual needs (Calvert, 2016).

Flynn et al. (2016) explored the impact of a year of one-on-one coaching for classroom behavior management strategies on reducing behavior incidences and suspensions for students the following year. The schools used for the study were part of the New York Public School System with high use of exclusionary discipline practices. The schools provided services primarily for low-income Black and Latino students. To design the coaching intervention, Flynn et al. used the Ramapo approach, which helps educators see behavior as a way that students communicate; as a result, teachers can foster an environment to meet students' needs, reduce challenging behaviors, and increase the use of inclusionary practices. The schools that received the intervention had a significant decrease in the number of behavior incidences and suspensions between the intervention and postintervention years. Flynn et al. highlighted how coaching could be a means of reducing exclusionary practices and suspension and behavior incidences at schools.

Few scholars have measured the impact of individualized coaching on the overall use of exclusionary discipline. However, even less have studied the direct impact of coaching cycles on the discipline gap between Black students and their peers (Gregory, Hafen et al., 2016). Gregory, Allen, et al. (2014) explored this gap in the literature by conducting a randomized control trial study on the effectiveness of the MyTeachingPartner–Secondary professional development program in reducing educators’ use of exclusionary discipline practices, particularly with Black students. The 95 participants came from five schools where 20% to 40% of students identified as low income and 40% to 79% of students identified as Black. The participants in the intervention group received ongoing, personalized coaching and feedback through the use of coaching cycles. Within these coaching cycles, the participants and their coach worked one on one to create goals, conduct observations, and develop culturally responsive strategies for improving their instructional practices. Gregory, Allen, et al. found that Black students in the classrooms of the educators who did not receive the intervention were 2.69 times more likely to receive exclusionary discipline than their peers. However, the classrooms with educators who received the intervention had similar risks of exclusionary discipline between Black students and their peers. In these classrooms, 5.8% of Black students and 6% of all other participants received at least one exclusionary consequence.

Understanding the effects of coaching on culturally responsive classroom practices is a relatively new topic to research (Teemant et al., 2011). However, empirical studies have shown the potential benefits of coaching for teacher practice and overall school discipline. Educators who learn to address their individual needs and the needs of the students can move from understanding culturally responsive practices to effectively implementing them in useful ways every day (Knight, 2009)

Professional Learning Communities

Educators should also receive the opportunity to engage in collaborative inquiry and critical reflection (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, Many, & Mattos, 2020). PLCs are spaces where school members can collaboratively engage in reflection to understand how practices result in different student outcomes (Stoll, Bolam, McMahon, Wallace, & Thomas, 2006). Studies have shown the positive impact of PLCs on students' academic achievement and teachers' instructional practices (Akiba & Liang, 2016; Vescio, Ross, & Adams, 2008). Effective professional learning should provide educators with ample time to "learn, practice, implement, and reflect upon new strategies that facilitate change in practice" (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017, p. 5). Educators should have the opportunity to work collectively to build PLCs as safe places for collaborative inquiry (Jensen et al., 2016). Within PLCs, teachers can build relationships with colleagues, share resources, and create a common language for effective practices (Learning Forward, 2011). PLCs enable educators to situate teaching and learning within their contexts and engage in dialogue to support the acquisition of knowledge (Mezirow, 1978). Collaboration with others is a way to enable educators to share their wealth of knowledge and experiences to support their colleagues (Knowles, 1968). However, limited literature has indicated how to use PLCs to prepare individuals to be culturally responsive educators (Cooper, Allen, & Bettez, 2009).

Moore (2018) sought to discover if collaboration in a PLC focused on critical reflection resulted in increased cultural awareness. The intent of the study was to understand the personal cultural experiences shared by the participants, the influence of cultural experiences on practice, and the actions in which participants could engage to develop cultural awareness at their prospective schools. The 10 participants were practicing educators taking a graduate-level course

on culturally diverse education. The PLCs occurred over 4 weeks and lasted 60 minutes within the 150-minute class. The participants read literature, engaged in conversations, and wrote reflections to uncover the unconscious beliefs and values that impacted how they worked with students. Moore found that the PLC provided a space for participants to engage in authentic conversation about cultural awareness.

Peters (2016) indicated that PLCs enable individuals to understand and develop an awareness of their stances and schemas, which is the first stage in teacher transformation for racial identity. Using inductive coding, Moore (2018) found that the participants justified using their cultural beliefs and norms to shape how they thought students should behave and act even if these norms and beliefs differed from their students'. The participants also shared the feeling that their schools had lower expectations for culturally diverse students; in turn, the low expectations affected how the educators worked with this student population.

Educators must work together to develop conditions for disrupting inequities in teaching and learning practices (Peters, 2016). The disruption of negative beliefs and perspectives is Peters' (2016) second stage of transformational development. A PLC enables participants to engage in difficult conversations to uncover biases and beliefs about culturally diverse student learners. Moore (2018) found that the PLC gave participants a safe and supportive place to engage in difficult conversations and set goals on developing cultural awareness in their schools to support positive student outcomes.

PLCs enable individuals to go through Peters' (2016) third and fourth stages of transformational identity development. The third stage consists of making new meaning; however, this cannot occur alone. PLCs can happen affinity groups with people who share similar experiences and with allies across differences to expand frames of reference. Through

PLCs, people can work together to get to the fourth stage of identifying new action or changing how schools address inequities for marginalized student groups (Moore, 2018; Peters, 2016).

PLCs are useful means of improving academic achievement (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009), educator collaboration, and reflection (King, 2016). Researchers have also highlighted the importance of ensuring that PLCs include multicultural knowledge and value diversity to support educators working with diverse student learners (Stoll et al., 2006).

However, few studies have shown the relationship between PLCs and educator knowledge and the use of culturally responsive practices in the classroom (Cooper et al., 2009). Moore (2018) was one of the first to examine how to use PLCs to develop educators' cultural awareness. Moore highlighted the potential for PLCs to be safe and collaborative spaces for educators to examine the impact of their beliefs and values about culturally diverse student learners on their practices.

Brief Summary of Proposed Intervention

Educators who work within culturally diverse schools should remain cognizant of their student populations and strive to understand their students' individual needs. Chapter 1 presented the factors that contribute to the discipline gap for Black students in urban settings. Using the information gathered in Chapter 1, a needs assessment commenced for a high school in Massachusetts to understand teachers' and school administrators' beliefs and attitudes about the role of discipline within the school. The needs assessment showed that although the participants did not find exclusionary disciplinary practices effective, they also lacked alternatives for dealing with problematic student behaviors (Dudley, 2019). This finding received further reinforcement when 70% of the participants reported that they did not receive proper training for managing student behaviors within their classrooms. Furthermore, the administrators indicated that the

school personnel needed to become more culturally responsive to understand their students better. The research has shown that the discipline gap for Black students remains, even in schools with decreased use of exclusionary discipline practices and increased use of positive alternative interventions (Wallace et al., 2008). Positive interventions have not reduced the discipline gap because they do not address the needs of diverse student populations (Lustick, 2017).

The findings from the needs assessment and the culturally responsive interventions presented in this literature review contributed to design an intervention. The goal of the intervention, which consisted of all-staff professional developments and individual coaching cycles, was to increase educators' knowledge of CRCM strategies to address the needs of diverse student learners. The purpose of the all-staff training was to create a shared understanding of CRCM practices and coaching cycles. The individualized coaching in the coaching cycles provided an opportunity for participating educators to reflect on their teaching practices and styles and students' needs. The individualized coaching gave teachers a chance to practice and learn more effective ways of managing culturally diverse classrooms. The participants engaged in reflective practices to understand the impact of their instructional practices on student behaviors. Chapter 4 presents the details of the intervention, including its timeline, components, and desired outcomes. The next chapter also presents the means used to evaluate the intervention.

Chapter 4

Intervention Procedure and Program Evaluation Methodology

The literature on the factors that contribute to the discipline gap for Black students has shown that cultural mismatch (McGrady & Reynolds, 2013) and teachers' beliefs, attitudes, decision-making (Scott et al., 2019), and classroom management (Valente et al., 2018) influence how teachers perceive and interpret Black students' behaviors. The needs assessment presented in Chapter 3 showed that educators needed additional training and resources for their classroom management practices. Most of the educators from the needs assessment did not agree with the use of exclusionary practices (e.g., suspensions, detentions, and out-of-classroom referrals); however, they felt they lacked the tools or resources to address student behaviors better.

As indicated in Chapter 3, there is a vast amount of literature specific to the factors that contribute to the discipline gap for Black students (Wallace et al., 2008). However, no studies have presented interventions directly tested to reduce this gap (Bottiani et al., 2018). Part of the reason for the lack of empirical research on this problem may be because many factors contribute to the discipline gap being a continued issue in education. Therefore, no one intervention is a means of reducing the gap (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010).

Furthermore, research shows that even with positive interventions to reduce the schoolwide use of exclusionary consequences, the discipline gap remains because these interventions do not directly address the needs of culturally diverse students (Lustick, 2017). More culturally responsive interventions are necessary to address the factors that contribute to the discipline gap for Black students. Chapter 4 presents the intervention used in this study to increase educators' knowledge of CRCM practices. The chapter includes the study's purpose, research design, and methods for implementing the intervention.

Purpose of the Study

The literature on interventions has shown that many factors contribute to the discipline gap. Any intervention for addressing a factor of this gap should also address the needs of culturally diverse students. Given this information, the purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of coaching cycles on teachers' knowledge of CRCM practices. Coaching cycles provide supports and structures for addressing the needs of educators and their classrooms (Sweeney & Harris, 2017). Additionally, the study focused on the impact of CRCM practices on teachers' beliefs and perceptions of student misbehaviors. The study had the following process and outcome research questions:

Process Research Question 1: To what extent was the intervention implemented as originally intended?

Process Research Question 2: How did the participants describe the quality of the coaching they received in the coaching cycles?

Outcome Research Question 1: In what ways did the participants' knowledge of CRCM change after participating in this intervention?

Outcome Research Question 2: How have participants' classroom management strategies changed after participating in the intervention?

Research Design

A qualitative case study design was appropriate to answer the study's research questions. The following section presents the elements of the intervention's research design, including the research methodology, process evaluation components, and outcome evaluation components.

Research Methodology

Coaching cycles address the individual needs of an educator. This study included an in-depth exploration of the participants' experiences with the intervention to assess its effectiveness and impact on the educators' teaching practices. An instrumental, explanatory case study design was appropriate to evaluate the impact of the coaching cycles on the educators' knowledge of CRCM practices and strategies for addressing the behaviors of culturally diverse student learners.

The U.S. Government Accountability Office (1990) indicated that a case study enables a researcher to learn about complex problems by gaining a comprehensive understanding of a problem through an extensive analysis within its specific context. A researcher conducts a qualitative case study to answer "how" and "why" questions about an intervention (Yin, 2018). In this study, the intervention's process research questions focused on the participants' experiences of the coaching cycles. The outcome research questions focused on how the intervention provided support for the intended outcomes.

Merriam (2009) highlighted the qualitative case study's particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic nature. The intervention under investigation had a particularistic nature because of its focus on using coaching cycles to support CRCM practices. The intervention also had a descriptive nature because its evaluation included multiple data sources (i.e., interviews, observations, and participant reflection forms). Finally, the intervention had a heuristic nature because it could enable readers to understand the impact of coaching cycles on educators' knowledge and practice of CRCM.

Researchers can choose from a variety of case study designs depending on the intended goals of the interventions. For the intervention in this study, an instrumental, explanatory design

was the means used to answer the process and outcome evaluation questions. Researchers use the instrumental case study design to gain “insight into an issue or theory needing refinement” (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014, p. 295), with the cases having a secondary, supportive role in helping the researchers better understand the problem. The purpose of an explanatory case study is to understand the influence of an intervention on the intended outcomes (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). The goal of this study postintervention was to discern if coaching cycles provided support for the short-term outcome of increasing educators’ knowledge and practice of CRCM. Thus, the study had both an instrumental and explanatory nature.

A researcher can use the qualitative case study design when a program has outcomes unique across participants (California Department of Health Services, 1999). This study’s intervention included providing individualized coaching to educators to build CRCM practices that addressed the behavioral needs of their students. Therefore, the strategies and practices used during the intervention differed across the participants and could have had an impact on how they experienced the intervention. For these reasons, there was a need to gather information to understand each participant’s experience and management practices.

Process Evaluation

A process evaluation is a means of assessing the different factors that influence the implementation of an intervention and how the participants received the intervention (Baranowski & Stables, 2000). The information gathered could contribute to improving the intervention in the future (Hannan, Russell, Takahashi, & Park, 2015). The intervention’s guiding research questions for evaluation, the process evaluation components, and the indicators were the means used to gather information for this study.

Adherence. The goal of the first research question was to address the extent to which the implementation of the intervention occurred as intended. Dusenbury, Brannigan, Falco, and Hansen (2003) defined fidelity of implementation as adherence, dose, program quality delivery, participant responsiveness, and program differentiation. Alternately, Baranowski and Stables (2000) defined fidelity as a program's implementation. Measuring adherence enables a researcher to understand how an intervention's mechanisms and timelines resulted in the observed outcomes and reduce the impact of outside factors on the intended outcomes (Dusenbury et al., 2003). Furthermore, measuring adherence is an accurate way to determine the internal validity of an experiment (Baranowski & Stables, 2000).

Dusenbury et al. (2003) described several ways of identifying intervention adherence: (a) following the protocol as outlined in the intervention plan, (b) completing all the components of the intervention, and (c) identifying the participants' implementation of the intervention as intended. The goal of the intervention in this study was to use structured coaching cycles; thus, there was a need to measure the participants' adherence to the concrete goals and intended outcomes for each stage within the coaching cycles. Implementing the coaching cycles as intended provided the opportunity to make direct connections between the intervention and the short-term goals outlined in the logic model (Appendix L) and summary matrix (Appendix K).

Quality of delivery. In addition to evaluating adherence within the intervention, another essential process evaluation component that aligns with the second research question is the quality of delivery in the intervention. The second research question focused on how the participants described the quality of the coaching cycles. The quality of delivery is the "quality of interaction and the degree to which interactive activities focus attention on desired elements" (Dusenbury et al., 2003, p. 244). In this study, the intervention should have given participants an

opportunity to make direct connections between coaching cycle quality and their engagement in the intervention. The purpose of the first two stages (goal-setting and preassessment) was to have the participants reflect on their classroom management practices. Thus, the quality of the first two stages had a direct influence on how the participants engaged in the last two stages of the intervention (implementation and reflection).

In the last stages of the intervention, the participants focused on practicing new strategies in their classes. The participants completed reflection forms at the end of each coaching cycle to assess the quality of the coaching. The reflection forms included information on the participants' remaining questions, the new information they learned, and the material that aligned with their existing thoughts about their practices. The reflection forms provided the data used to understand the quality of the coaching cycles.

Outcome Evaluation

The purpose of an outcome evaluation is to assess whether an intervention has had the intended effect on the target population or program (Rossi, Lipsey, & Henry, 2019). A goal of this study was to measure whether the intervention resulted in the intended outcomes to determine whether the intervention, or other unrelated factors, influenced the outcomes. Various data collection strategies commenced to evaluate the participants' unique experiences and the influence of these experiences on the intended outcomes.

Pre- and postintervention interviews with questions about the participants' knowledge of CRCM practices provided the information needed to answer the first research question. The preintervention interview enabled the assessment of the participants' baseline knowledge of CRCM. In contrast, the postintervention interviews provided an opportunity for participants to reflect on any changes in their knowledge about CRCM practices. The participants filled out

reflection forms at the end of each coaching cycle, providing the data needed to answer the second research question. The participants used the form to reflect on their coaching cycle experiences and the information they used to change their management practices.

The instructional coach also observed the participants' classroom practices in two stages of the coaching cycles. In the preassessment stage, the coach assessed the educators' practices. Subsequently, in the implementation stage, the coach observed the educators after receiving coaching, support, and strategies to improve their practices. The coach's observation notes provided the data used to document the changes the educators made to their management practices based on the coaching.

Method

The following section presents the participants, measures, and procedures for the intervention.

Participants

The participant population consisted of full-time educators from a student-serving organization in large city on the Northeast U.S. who taught entrepreneurship classes to high school students in the program for at least 3 days a week. The participants were both men and women who represented a wide range of teaching experience. Verification of the information occurred with an administrative database. Only the research team members had access to the data related to the research, such as employment status and job responsibilities. The data were documented and stored with the participants' unidentifiable information. At the time of the study, 10 educators worked full-time and taught at least 3 days a week. The participant eligibility required educators in full-time roles who taught at least 3 days a week; therefore, 10 was the maximum number of participants recruited.

Recruitment occurred with convenience sampling, which Lochmiller and Lester (2017) defined as the process of engaging the most accessible individuals. The sample population consisted of the participants from the researcher's current place of employment; therefore, the researcher had easy access to the participants. Recruitment occurred with a standard script sent to the participants' work e-mail addresses (see Appendix B). The researcher held a leadership position within the organization and supervised seven of the 10 educators eligible to participate in the study; therefore, the researcher's supervisor was the instructional coach for the intervention. The researcher was not responsible for the pay, evaluations, or job retention of the supervisor. The supervisor had a Ph.D. in education and over 25 years of instructional coaching experience in diverse settings.

Measures or Instrumentation

Qualitative data collection methods occurred to conduct the intervention and evaluate whether the participants used the coaching to inform and develop their knowledge of CRCM practices. Collected data were from pre- and postintervention interviews, reflection forms, coach observation tools, the researcher's observation journal, and coaching session meeting notes.

Pre- and postintervention interviews. Pre- and postintervention interviews were the means used to gather qualitative data. Researchers can conduct three types of interviews: structured, semistructured, and unstructured (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). In this study, a semistructured interview process was appropriate to collect information on the participants' knowledge of CRCM practices before and after the intervention. Semistructured interviews provide the opportunity to develop key questions related to the phenomenon under investigation, enabling the researcher and the participants to explore ideas or thoughts more deeply through follow-up conversations or questions (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008).

The preintervention interview occurred before the participants engaged in their first coaching cycle. This interview provided data on the participants' initial understanding of CRCM, the practices they used to manage culturally diverse groups of students, and the factors they considered when addressing student behaviors. The preintervention interview questions included:

1. To the best of your knowledge, please describe how your classroom is diverse (i.e., by gender, race, culture, and ability).
2. What does CRCM mean to you?
3. What practices do you currently engage in to manage a culturally diverse classroom?

See Appendix C for the full list of preintervention interview questions.

The postintervention interviews occurred at the end of the intervention. The goal of the postintervention interviews was to evaluate the participants' experiences of the intervention, the quality of the intervention's delivery, the participants' perceptions of how they had changed their knowledge of CRCM practices, and their perceptions of the changes that they had made to their CRCM practices. Example postintervention interview questions included:

1. How would you describe your experience in the intervention?
2. How would you describe the quality of the coaching in the coaching cycles you participated in?
3. How have your classroom management strategies changed after participating in the intervention?

See Appendix D for the full list of postintervention questions.

Reflection forms. The participants completed guided reflection forms (see Appendix E) adapted from EL Education (2020) at the end of each coaching cycle. The participants used the reflection forms to make meaning of their experiences by examining, inquiring into, and

interpreting various factors of their experiences (Husu, Toom, & Patrikainen, 2008). The reflection form enabled the collection of information on the quality of the coaching cycles and the participants' responsiveness to the coaching. The coaching cycles occurred based on the improvement science framework (Knight, 2018). Therefore, the reflection forms provided the data used to adjust the coaching to meet the participants' needs in future cycles. Sample questions on the reflection form included:

1. At this point in the coaching cycle, how has the coaching cycle provided support for how you view your classroom management practices?
2. At this point in the coaching cycle, what questions do you have about your classroom management practices that the coaching cycle did not address?

Coach's observation form. The coach conducted observations during the second and third stages of the coaching cycle. The first observation occurred to gather baseline data of the participants' classroom management practices related to the goals they set with the coach at the beginning of the cycle. The second observation occurred to assess how the participants had changed their classroom management practices to achieve their goals based on the coaching. The coaching observations enabled the coach and the educator to understand and recognize the instructional patterns within the classroom (see Whitehurst, Chingos, & Lindquist, 2014). Through the observations, the coach provided high-quality feedback that the educators used to make reflective changes to their teaching practices (Sweeney, 2014).

The coach used the observation form (see Appendix F) adapted from EL Education (2020) to gather data on the educators' instructional practices pertaining to their coaching goals. The observation form included the shared goal, the "look fors" identified by the coach and participants, instructional practices and student evidence showing the impact of the instructional

practices on students, debrief questions, the next steps for instruction based on observation and evidence, lingering questions, and the supports needed to improve practice for positive student outcomes. The coach's observation form was the tool used to assess the quality of the intervention and track the changes the educators made to their classroom management practices based on coaching conversations.

Field notes. Field notes occurred throughout the intervention. The purpose of field notes is to produce thick, rich descriptions of the context of the study (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2017). In addition, field notes allow researchers to document nontextual or auditory information about observations, interviews, and other interactions to make meaning and provide depth to the phenomenon under investigation (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2017). The field notes in this intervention had two purposes.

The field note collection occurred during the pre- and postinterviews to record the participants' appearances, demeanors, and nonverbal behaviors during the interviews. Additionally, the participants completed reflection forms to document their experiences in the coaching cycles. The coaching cycles occurred with an improvement science framework (Sweeney & Harris, 2017). Therefore, the coach considered the reflections to adjust the subsequent coaching cycle to better support the participants. Field notes were the means used to track the changes made to the coaching cycles and evaluate the extent to which coaching cycle implementation occurred as intended.

Coaching session meeting notes. The coach followed a coaching session agenda based on the coaching cycle. Several types of meetings occurred to guide the coaching cycle. In the initial partnership meeting, the coach met with each participant to discuss how to work together. The initial meeting enabled the coach to establish coaching relationships with the participants

and address their working styles and preferred forms of communication. The initial partnership meeting template (EL Education, 2020) appears in Appendix G.

In the goal-setting meetings, the coach outlined the goals and purpose of the coaching cycles, as well as the supports and practices provided during the coaching cycle. The goal-setting form, adapted from EL Education (2020) and Sweeney and Harris (2017), appears in Appendix H. The form included questions, such as:

1. What is the goal for student learning for this coaching cycle? What do we hope the students will learn as a result of our partnership?
2. What are the criteria for success to help students reach the goal? How will you know you or the students met the goal?

The observation debrief meetings occurred after each observation, during which the coach and participants reflected on the coach's observations. The coach provided feedback using Bambrick-Santoyo and Peiser's (2012) six steps of effective feedback (see Appendix I): praise, probe, identify the problem and action step, practice, plan, and follow-up. In each stage, the coach utilized an observation debrief protocol (Appendix M) that included guided tasks and questions to facilitate the feedback sessions and provide actionable steps for improving instructional practices. The protocol was a guide for both the preassessment observation debriefs and the implementation observation debriefs.

Procedure

The final section of this chapter presents the intervention design and the data collection and analysis procedures. Because this intervention had a qualitative case study design, data analysis occurred with the qualitative data analysis procedure: organizing the data for analysis,

becoming familiar with the data, transcribing the data, coding the data, and categorizing and theming the data (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017).

Intervention. The intervention consisted of two key components: two preintervention training for all participants and three rounds of coaching cycles. Participant recruitment lasted from September 21, 2020, to October 3, 2020; the preintervention training occurred on October 16, 2020, and October 23, 2020; and the 4-week coaching cycles ran from November 2020 to March 2021. The delivery of the intervention occurred in the context of an afterschool program. Because the afterschool program did not provide student programming in December, no coaching cycles occurred that month.

The initial intent was for the intervention to take place in person at the school. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic during the 2020 academic year, all intervention components occurred virtually to ensure the participants' safety. Table 4.1 shows the overview and timeline of the intervention, including the components, length, duration, location, information, and measurements.

Table 4.1

Overview and Timeline of Intervention

Intervention component	Component length and timeframe	Location	Information delivered	Instrument and measures
Preintervention Training 1	2 hours October 16, 2020 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.	Virtual via Zoom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose, outcome, and timeline for intervention • Overview of Sweeney’s Student-Centered Coaching Model (Sweeney & Harris, 2017) • Open Q&A to address questions about the information that was delivered in training 	N/A <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PowerPoint presentation
Preintervention Training 2	2 hours October 16, 2020 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.	Virtual via Zoom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of coach: Meg Riordan • Overview of each stage of the coaching cycle • Coach and participant expectations and deliverables for each stage of the coaching cycle • Open Q&A to address any questions about the information that was delivered • Interviews with participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PowerPoint presentation • Coaching cycle documents
Preintervention interview	1 hour October 26, 2020	Virtual Via Zoom	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video and voice recording of interview • Researcher’s field notes

Intervention component	Component length and timeframe	Location	Information delivered	Instrument and measures
Coaching cycles	<p>First cycle: November 2, 2020, to November 27, 2020</p> <p>Second cycle: January 11, 2021, to February 5, 2021</p> <p>Third cycle: February 8, 2021, to March 5, 2021</p>	<p>Coaching sessions: Virtual via Zoom</p> <p>Classroom observations: Virtual via Zoom</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach and participants will engage in the four stages of the coaching cycle: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Goal setting – Preassessment – Implementation – Reflection/reassessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial meeting form • Goal-setting form • Coach's observation forms • Observation debrief forms • Participant end of cycle reflection forms • Researcher's field notes
Postintervention interviews	1 hour March 8, 2021	Virtual via Zoom	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video and voice recording of interview • Researcher's field notes

The preintervention training consisted of two 2-hour whole-group sessions that occurred via the Zoom video communication platform. At the first virtual orientation on November 6, 2020, the participants learned the intervention's purpose, intended outcomes, and timeline. At the second virtual preintervention training on November 20, 2020, the participants gained a better understanding of the student-centered coaching cycles. The participants learned about the goal of each coaching cycle and the supports that they would receive in each stage.

After completing the preintervention session, the participants engaged in virtual coaching cycles via Zoom. The coaching cycles had four stages: goal-setting, preassessment, implementation, and reflection/reassessment (Sweeney & Harris, 2017). Each stage, which lasted 1 to 2 weeks, provided the participants with the support they needed to improve their classroom management practices.

Goal-setting, the first stage, occurred during the first week of the coaching cycles. During this stage, the coach and the participants worked together to establish student goals driven by specific competencies (see Sweeney & Harris, 2017). The coach and the participants met two times during the initial goal-setting stage. In the first meeting, which lasted approximately 30 minutes, the coach and participants set guidelines and expectations for their partnership during the intervention. The coach and participants then scheduled and conducted follow-up, 60-minute goal-setting meetings to establish student goals driven by specific competencies.

After establishing their goals, the coach and participants moved to the preassessment stage, which occurred during the second and third weeks of the coaching cycles. During the second week, the coach and participants gathered baseline data to determine where the students were in relation to the coaching goals. Next, the coach and educators determined and scheduled times for the coach to conduct 20-minute baseline observations of the educators during class.

The coach collaborated with the participants for scheduling and made the participants the leaders of their learning, providing them autonomy for the observation times (see Sweeney & Harris, 2017). After the preassessment observations, the coach and participants had 30-minute observation debriefs. In these sessions, the coach discussed the data collected during the observations and worked with the participants to determine the instructional practices they could implement to support students as indicated in their coaching goals.

The implementation and reflection stage of the coaching cycles occurred during the fourth and final week of the intervention. At the beginning of the week, the participants implemented the instructional practices they had discussed with the coach in the preassessment stage (see Sweeney & Harris, 2017). Once again, the coach and the participants collaboratively determined and scheduled 20-minute observations of the participants' instructional strategy implementation. The coach gathered data and evidence to assess where the students were in relation to the participants' coaching goals after they had implemented the strategies.

The data collected from the implementation stage were the means used to guide the reflection/assessment stage. The purpose of this final stage of the coaching cycle was to determine whether the students had reached their coaching goals (Sweeney & Harris, 2017). During this stage, the coach and participants conducted 30-minute observation debriefs to look at the data and evidence from the observations. If the analysis of the collected data showed that the students did not meet the coaching goals, the goals remained the same for the following coaching cycle so that the participants could try different strategies. If the coach and participants found that the students had progressed toward the goal, they set new goals for the next cycle. The participants also completed reflection forms during this stage to assess the quality of the coaching cycle and provide feedback on how to improve the cycle.

Data collection. This section presents the tools and measures used throughout the qualitative case study. The data collection occurred virtually via online platforms due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Collecting qualitative data via online platforms has strengths and weaknesses. A strength is that virtual data collection minimizes the chance of human error and facilitates the transfer of data during the analysis stage (Lefever, Dal, & Matthíasdóttir, 2007). However, a weakness is the need to ensure the collected data remain confidential, while on a virtual platform. Additionally, researchers cannot pick up physical cues from the participants in the same way they can with in-person data collection (Skågeby, 2011). This section presents the processes used in this study to collect the data for the intervention.

Interview. One-hour interviews occurred with the participants via Zoom before and after the intervention. Zoom's record feature enabled the recording of the interviews, with Otter.ai subsequently used for transcription. The use of technology allowed the researcher to engage fully with each participant. The interviews had a semistructured format in which the participants could explain and explore their thoughts about the questions. The video and audio recordings underwent deletion after transcription to protect the participants' privacy. Appendix C contains the preinterview questions; Appendix D contains the postinterview questions.

Reflection forms. The participants completed reflections at the end of each coaching cycle to gather information on their experiences. The coach sent the participants the link to the reflection form at the end of each cycle's coaching meeting. The participants had to complete their reflection forms before they started the next coaching cycle. The reflection forms provided the formative process evaluation data used to improve the participants' experiences for the next coaching cycle.

Observation forms. The coach conducted two classroom observations per participant during the preassessment and implementation stage of the coaching cycle. The purpose of the observations was to assess the students in relation to the participants' coaching goals. The coach completed an observation form via Google Forms after each observation. The participants and the coach viewed the observation forms to support collaboration and transparency during the coaching cycles.

Meeting notes. Various meetings occurred during each coaching cycle, including initial partnership, goal-setting, observation debrief, and reflection meetings. Note collection commenced for the partnership and goal-setting meetings during the first week of the coaching cycle. Note collection of the observation debrief meetings occurred during the second and fourth week of the coaching cycle. Similarly, note collection for the reflection meetings occurred during the fourth week of the coaching cycle. Each participant had a designated coaching cycle folder within the researcher's Google Drive, with three subfolders for each coaching cycle. The coach used Google Docs to track and save meeting notes in the corresponding folder. The researcher, participants, and the coach had access to the meeting notes.

Field notes. Field note collection occurred throughout the intervention. Documentation of the field notes again occurred with Google Docs, with a Google Drive folder used to store the field notes. Only the researcher had access to the field notes. Field note collection took place after each interview and after the participants had completed their reflection forms following each coaching cycle.

Data analysis. The purpose of qualitative data analysis is to support the researcher in bringing meaning and order to the collected data (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017). Qualitative

research methods with an emergent design enable researchers to make meaning and adjust their findings based on the data (Lochmiller & Lester, 2017).

Interviews and reflection forms. The data from the interviews and reflections underwent analysis with inductive coding. Inductive coding is how researchers develop themes and findings directly from the data set (Thomas, 2006). Inductive coding is a means of creating a wide range of themes and limiting the possibility of researcher bias with themes drawn directly from the data (Saldaña, 2015). Interview coding occurred in four cycles. In the first three rounds, the interviews and reflection forms underwent separate coding; in the last round, theme creation occurred based on the entire data set.

In vivo coding in the first round was a means to pull direct quotes from the participants' responses. The second cycle consisted of color-coding the participants' quotes to find similarities. Individual thematic coding occurred in the third round of coding to group the codes by themes. Finally, group thematic coding commenced to group the participants' responses into themes.

Observation forms and meeting notes. Given the individualized nature of the coaching cycles and the specific goals of each participant, the observation forms and meeting notes underwent coding and theming across all three coaching cycles for each participant. Also, not every theme applied to every participant because of the individualized nature of the coaching. Analyzing the observation forms showed the trends and changes in the instructional practices and techniques across all three coaching cycles for each participant. Coding of the observation form occurred with the same multicycle coding process used for the interviews and reflections.

Fieldnotes. Analysis of the field notes commenced to measure each participant's adherence to the intervention and find additional data to supplement the pre- and postinterview

responses. The field notes were the means used to compare the original intervention plan to its actual implementation and identify the changes made in each coaching cycle based on the participants' needs.

Strengths and Limitations

Qualitative case studies have several key strengths. First, qualitative research provides flexibility for the data selection, collection, and analysis (Stake, 1995). Case study researchers can choose from a wide range of options, from which type of data to collect and how to analyze the data to the amount of data necessary to understand the phenomena under study (Hsieh, 2000). In addition to flexibility, qualitative case studies enable researchers to understand the factors contributing to a specific phenomenon through in-depth analysis of a particular case or set of cases (Merriam, 2009).

Another key strength of qualitative case studies is that researchers can evaluate programs and interventions when the outcomes vary across participants (California Department of Health Services, 1999). Coaching cycles provide supports and coaching for educators based on their individual needs. All the participating educators engaged in the same coaching cycle stages; however, they may have received different training and supports. The use of the qualitative case study design indicated the aspects of the coaching cycles the participants found helpful for addressing their classroom management practices.

However, qualitative case study designs have limitations with generalizability, reliability, validity, and the potential for bias. A qualitative case study researcher intentionally selects a sample population and chooses cases based on the study's purpose (California Department of Health Services, 1999). The intentional nature of case selection presents a challenge in producing results generalizable to a larger population, as a case study lacks a representative sample (Hsieh,

2000). Researchers have also questioned the reliability and validity of qualitative case studies because data analysis is subject to the researcher's interpretation of the data (Merriam, 2009). In qualitative case studies, researchers are both evaluators and participants in the research (California Department of Health Services, 1999). The dual role of qualitative case study researchers could affect how a researcher interprets the data. Additionally, a researcher could potentially omit data from the research that does not support the desired perspective (Hsieh, 2000; Merriam, 2009).

There is no way to address some of the limitations of a qualitative case study, such as generalizability. However, there were several steps taken to support the credibility of this study. In qualitative case study research, the evaluator is also a participant. In this study, the researcher assumed the evaluator role, but another individual unconnected to the research took on the coach's role to reduce the potential for researcher bias. In addition, data triangulation occurred with four data sources to increase the internal validity of the findings.

A qualitative case study design was the approach taken in this study to determine if coaching cycles were a means of increasing educators' knowledge of CRCM and diverse ways of addressing student misbehavior. Additionally, evaluation of both the intervention's process and outcomes was a means of refining the intervention to ensure the continuous improvement of the teachers' classroom practices (Lewis, 2015). The intervention in this study contributed to the research on the influence of culturally responsive practices on some of the factors that contribute to the discipline gap for Black students.

Chapter 5

Findings and Discussion

Closing the discipline gap for Black students requires multiple interventions, as many factors contribute to discrepant disciplinary practices for Black students in urban settings. Previous chapters presented cultural mismatch, teacher beliefs and decision-making, and classroom management as key components of how school personnel understand and interpret student behavior. Effective professional development presents an individualized approach to supporting educators. These professional learning experiences incorporate factors such as the educator's approach to teaching, relationships, and classroom dynamics (Teemant, Wink, & Tyra, 2011).

Chapter 5 presents the findings of this qualitative case study to explore how student-centered coaching cycles could influence teachers' knowledge and use of culturally responsive classroom management practices to better understand the behaviors of diverse student learners. The first section includes the empirical findings, followed by a discussion of the study's limitations, implications for practice, and suggestions for future research. The following process and outcome research questions guided the organization of the findings and discussion:

1. To what extent was the intervention implemented as originally intended?
2. How did participants describe the quality of the coaching they received in the coaching cycles?
3. In what ways did participants' knowledge of culturally responsive classroom management practices change after participating in this intervention?
4. How have participants' classroom management strategies changed after participating in the intervention?

Participant Demographic

The study included two participants who identify as White, middle-class women between the ages of 20 and 25. Both participants worked as full-time educators teaching entrepreneurship to urban high school students in Grades 10 through 12. Participant 1 had worked at the organization for over 4 years, while Participant 2 had been there 2 years.

The Intervention

The intervention study consisted of two preintervention trainings, pre- and postinterviews, and two coaching cycles. The goal of this first training was to inform participants about the purpose of the study, the intended outcomes, and the intervention's timeline and duration. The second training helped participants make connections between using student-centered coaching cycles and culturally responsive classroom management. Another key component of the intervention was one-on-one interviews to gather pre- and postintervention data on the participants' knowledge and use of culturally responsive classroom management practices.

In addition to the training and interviews, each participant engaged in two coaching cycles lasting 4 to 6 weeks. The coaching cycle comprised four stages: goal-setting, preassessment, implementation, and reassessment. The goal-setting stage helped participants create a coaching cycle goal. The preassessment stage was a time to gather data on current instructional practices and student outcomes. During the implementation stage, participants integrated the strategies discussed with the coach into their instruction. Finally, participants used student data, observation debriefs, and reflections to assess progress toward the coaching goal in the reassessment stage.

Process Evaluation

A process evaluation is a way to assess how different factors influence the implementation of an intervention and how the participants received the intervention (Baranowski & Stables, 2000). The information gathered from a process evaluation can help a researcher assess effectiveness and make changes to a future intervention (Hannan, Russell, Takahashi, & Park, 2015). This process evaluation included a review of the planned versus actual intervention and presented the participants' perceptions of the quality of the coaching cycles included in the intervention.

Fidelity of Implementation

Research Question 1 was a means to identify the extent to which the intervention was implemented as originally intended. Answering the first research question required describing the implementation process and discussing any changes to the planned intervention. An individual outside the study conducted the coaching for the intervention. This researcher conducted the two 2-hour trainings for both participants, the preintervention interviews, and the postintervention interviews. Therefore, both the coach's notes on the coaching cycles and the researcher's field notes on the trainings and interviews guided the analysis. The coach documented any meetings, observations, and supports added or modified during the intervention; the researcher's field notes outlined any changes made to the training and interviews.

Preintervention Trainings

The first preintervention training took place via Zoom on October 16, 2020. The goal of this first training was to inform participants about the purpose of the study, the intended outcomes, and the intervention timeline and duration. The training began by having participants discuss what makes instructional coaching/coaches effective and the implications coaching can

have on their work. The purpose of starting with this topic was to gain a baseline understanding of how participants viewed coaching. After the initial discussion on effective instructional coaching, participants learned about three types of instructional coaching: teacher-centered, student-centered, and relationship-driven. Although the intervention had a student-centered coaching approach, it was important for participants to be aware of the different types of coaching strategies and why the study used a student-centered coaching approach. After watching video clips showing different types of coaching, participants had to identify the coaching strategy and find evidence within the video to support their responses. This exercise was a way to assess participants' understanding of the three types of goals. During the discussion, this researcher noted that participants were highly engaged and asking thoughtful questions that pushed their thinking and challenged the researcher. For example, one participant asked, "How do we know which coaching is the most effective at a certain point in time, and is there a place for the different types to coexist simultaneously?"

After discussing different types of instructional coaching, the researcher reviewed the study process, duration, and timeline. Participants were able to ask clarifying and probing questions to help them feel more comfortable with the coaching process. One of the participants said it was the first time she would receive any individual support with her classroom and was excited to have some targeted practice and support. At the end of the first training, this researcher gave participants a preview of the next training session and asked for suggestions to improve the first session. Participants provided feedback via a Google Form in response to three questions: (a) What are three key points you are taking away from today? (b) What is still circling in your mind? and (c) What is something that confirms what you thought or knew about the topic covered today?

Two weeks after their first preintervention training, participants engaged in their second preintervention professional learning experience. This training took place via Zoom on October 30, 2020. This researcher grounded participants in Ladson-Billings' (1994) culturally responsive pedagogy, Gay's (2010) culturally responsive teaching theory, and Muniz's (2019) eight competencies for culturally responsive teaching. These three frameworks helped participants understand why and how they would use culturally responsive classroom management as a framework for creating goals in the coaching cycle. Participants had the opportunity to review each document in advance. During the training, they had a google doc to capture thoughts on what different classroom management strategies would look and sound like, reflecting the eight competencies. Participants could more easily identify strategies related to building relationships with students and struggled more to identify ways to collaborate with families and the local community.

Additionally, utilizing Muniz's (2019) competencies, participants worked together to identify the competencies in which they felt confident and which they found challenging. Participants discussed their potential goals for a coaching cycle and collecting student data to gather evidence toward their goals. One participant was nervous about how the coaching cycle would impact her time, given that it would require additional meetings with a coach. This researcher helped the participant identify potential solutions and explained that the coach would work collaboratively with her to identify times that met both their needs.

At the end of the session, participants could reflect on the effectiveness of the training using the same Google Forms format as in Session 1. Highlights from the feedback included concerns about having enough time, nervousness about having someone observe their practice,

excitement about intentional time for training and support, and enthusiasm around the ability to collect student data to assess progress toward coaching goals.

Preintervention and Postintervention Interviews

During the preintervention interview, participants answered several questions related to diversity in their classroom, confidence in leading a culturally diverse classroom, considerations when addressing student behavior, and classroom management practices. Participant 1 highlighted age, student interest, learning styles, and culture as ways her students were diverse. She explained, “Students in my classroom live in different parts of Boston. Some were born in this country, some were not, and a lot of them speak different languages.” In contrast, Participant 2 referenced gender and sexual orientation as ways her class was diverse. However, she expressed that there were more similarities than differences in her students—for example, “There is a high percentage of non-White students in my class, and most, if not all, come from a lower-to middle-class background.”

In defining what culturally responsive classroom management meant to her, Participant 1 acknowledged the need to “recognize that every single student is different.” She emphasized that it was important for teachers to “create a relationship with students that was best for them and work with students to figure out what support they needed to be successful.” Participant 2 focused on acknowledging assumptions and understanding students’ behavior in defining culturally responsive classroom management. As a White woman teaching a class where most students did not look like her, she needed to approach interactions without assumptions. She said, “It is important for me to ensure that the way that I am managing is not based on my assumptions but based on a standard set in the class.” Additionally, Participant 2 discussed

recognizing that students may express themselves in many ways, and “looking to understand why a student is acting a certain way” helps her better interpret student behavior.

In addition to how they defined culturally responsive classroom management, participants also discussed their confidence in leading a culturally diverse classroom. Participant 1 did not feel as confident, while Participant 2 felt “pretty confident.” Some factors that influenced Participant 1’s response included not having the same lived experiences as her students and not knowing a lot about different cultures. However, she mitigated some of these challenges by “allowing the students to kind of guide how they want to interact with me, so that it is authentic.” Furthermore, Participant 1 stated that part of the reason she was not as confident was because there was always something more to learn and that by having a growth mindset, she was always in a place to embrace change and learn from her students. Participant 2 connected her high level of confidence to how she developed and maintained relationships with students: “I place connecting with students at the center so that students are more comfortable expressing themselves.” Participant 2 expressed that she could leverage her authentic relationships with students to help her manage her class and better understand her students.

The preintervention interview allowed this researcher to gather baseline information from the participants. In contrast, the postintervention interview helped participants explore their experience in the coaching cycle and any changes to their knowledge and use of culturally responsive classroom management practices. They provided insights on strengths and areas for further development related to student-centered coaching and how coaching impacted their views and practices in the classroom. They shared how they used student data to create goals, make instructional decisions, and try different strategies. Furthermore, the participants discussed the coach’s role in their overall development as teachers. Overall, both the pre- and postintervention

interviews occurred as initially intended without any additional changes to the process or questions.

Coaching Cycles

All aspects of the coaching cycle took place as intended except for the observations. In the original plan, the coach was to conduct two observations during each cycle, one during the preassessment stage and one during the implementation stage. However, participants received two additional observations during the first coaching cycle and one extra observation during the second coaching cycle.

First, the coach conducted an initial observation before starting the first coaching cycle to better understand the class and the teacher she was supporting. Given that this was the coach's first time working with both teachers, this initial observation helped her build rapport with each participant. The second additional observation occurred during the reassessment stage. This observation was a way to determine progress toward the coaching goal after the participant consistently implemented a specific strategy over several classes. Through this observation, the participant and the coach could decide whether they wanted to continue, modify, or create a new coaching goal for the following coaching cycle.

Fidelity of Implementation Summary

Dusenbury et al. (2003) proposed several strategies for identifying adherence in an intervention, including following protocol as outlined in the original plan, completing all intervention components, and implementing the participant intervention, as needed. Overall, utilizing these suggestions as guidelines, this researcher maintained high fidelity of implementation. Beyond the addition of two observations, the delivery of all intervention components was as planned, without any changes or modifications. The quality and impact of the

coaching cycle on the participants' knowledge and use of culturally responsive classroom management practices receive discussion in the following section.

Quality of Coaching Cycles

This section presents the findings for Research Question 2 on participants' perception of the quality of the coaching cycles. Guiding the findings for this research question were several high-level themes: reflection, coach-related factors, intervention design, and data.

Qualitative Coding and Theme Development

The themes identified in this section emerged from coding three data sources: coaching cycle reflections, observation debriefs, and postintervention interviews. Each data source underwent four coding cycles. The first three cycles served the purpose of finding themes for each participant and the last cycle allowed this researcher to identify high-level trends across both participants. The first three cycles consisted of in vivo coding, color coding, and individual thematic coding; the last cycle entailed group thematic coding across both participants. Table 5.1 shows the themes discussed in this section and examples of the codes aligned with each theme.

Table 5.1

Themes and Codes for Research Question 2

Theme	Definition	Sample code
Reflection	The ability to engage in intentional conversations about instructional practices	Dedicated time Classroom reflection Limited time Instruction
Coach-related factors	Factors specific to the coach that influenced participant experience	Coach content knowledge Collaboration with coach Coach support Coach instructional delivery Coach disposition
Intervention design	Factors related to the intervention design that influenced participant experience	Frequency Duration Strategies Planning Timing of intervention
Data	Evidence gathered during coach cycle to inform coaching cycle goals and progress towards goals	Data usage Data analysis Data implementation

Reflection. Defined for this study, reflection is the ability to engage in intentional conversations about instructional practices. Both participants reported that the coaching cycles provided them with planned time to reflect on their students and instruction. Participant 1 stated, “Often, we just don’t have the time for reflection in our day-to-day.” Similarly, Participant 2 said, “It was nice to have intentional space and time to work on my goal because oftentimes we’re doing a lot of things, and I don’t have as much time to reflect or create the space to reflect.” The intentional design of the coaching cycles provided participants with dedicated time to fine-tune their instructional practices to better support students. Participant 2 further stressed the importance of reflection, stating, “I have the opportunity to reflect with someone else on the parts of the classroom experience that doesn’t get that much attention because I am too busy trying to get students to learn content.”

Although reflecting with the coach was beneficial, Participant 1 wanted to have opportunities to reflect with her co-teacher. She asked, “How can we incorporate some of these questions and conversations with my co-teacher so that students are getting consistent instruction?” She continued, “It also makes me wonder how we can observe other teachers, learn about their goals, and share resources if we have the same goal.” Given the feedback from participants, one of the benefits of engaging in coaching is having an uninterrupted space to acknowledge what is happening in the classroom and being intentional about how to move forward to promote high student achievement. However, it is also essential to consider how these cycles can foster collaboration across multiple teachers.

Coach-related factors. In addition to providing time to reflect, the coach played a significant role in the coaching experience for both participants. The coach-related factors that influenced how participants described the quality of coaching included interactions, content knowledge, and instructional delivery.

Interactions. For coaching cycles to be effective, participants must view their relationship with their coach as collaborative and supportive (Sweeney, 2014). Both participants enjoyed interacting with their coach. The coach provided them ownership over their learning and pushed them to think about creative ways to support diverse student learners. Participant 2 stated, “I enjoyed interacting with my coach. It was nice to have someone who not only wanted to help me but made me feel comfortable and like we were on a team together.” For Participant 1, “The coach provided a great deal of welcomed positive reinforcement that made me feel more confident in challenging myself.”

Building a strong relationship with the coach happened over the course of both coaching cycles. For example, in her reflection after the first coaching cycle, when asked how comfortable

she felt discussing challenges with her coach, Participant 1 stated that it was “a little weird” because she did not know her coach that well. However, when asked again in her reflection at the end of the second cycle, she stated, “Yes! My coach is asset-based and allowed me to come to my conclusions without forcing me to think what she wanted me to think.” These positive interactions built over time and required the investment of both the participants and the coach.

Content knowledge and instructional delivery. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) posited that effective professional development should be content-focused and allow for collaboration with an expert coach. The coach was able to provide valuable insights into Participant 1’s teaching and learning. She explained, “My coach is an incredibly knowledgeable person, not only with resources but also in the way she interacts with people.” Participant 2’s coach had a lot of content knowledge, which influenced her opinion of the coaching cycle; however, she also admired the coach’s instructional delivery. Participant 2 said,

My coach usually started the conversation by doing some praise, some observations and feedback, and then she would ask me what I thought about the feedback and how I thought we could use it to move us forward in the coaching cycle.

Participant 1 shared some of the same sentiments related to having ownership over how she incorporated feedback.

The coach provided both opportunities for focusing on feedback from my own experience and analyzing the student data we collected, but I could have benefited from more direct feedback after I provided my own assessment to, one, ensure my thinking was on the right track for the outcomes we were looking for and, two, to get the perspective of a trained educator.

Determining the balance between coach support and teacher ownership is crucial in the coaching cycle. For example, while Participant 2 enjoyed the independence to think creatively about using the feedback, Participant 1 needed more targeted instruction to help her feel more confident in utilizing different strategies.

Intervention design. The intervention design also contributed to how participants viewed the quality of the coaching cycles. This section highlights both the positive feedback and areas for improvement to make coaching cycles more effective for the participants.

Positive. There were several key strengths in the intervention design, including that it provided individualized support that generally would not happen for the participants. “It was nice to see attention being given to us becoming better educators for our students,” said Participant 1. Participant 2 emphasized, “It really provided a way for me to take what I learn in our team [professional development] and apply it to my classroom.” Another positive aspect of the coaching cycle was the ability to collect and analyze data. For Participant 2, “It was helpful that the coach immediately shared her observation data right away”; Participant 1 “liked that the observation included student evidence.” The four stages of the coaching cycle were also a positive aspect for both participants; for example, Participant 2 related, “I like that I had time to set goals and meet with my coach consistently.”

Areas of growth. Although the participants identified positive aspects of the intervention design, there were several opportunities for improvement. Both participants wanted the coaching cycle to be longer, with more frequent observations. They found the coaching cycles helpful, but they did not think a 4- to 6-week cycle provided enough opportunity to observe the changes they wanted to see in their classrooms. Additionally, Participant 2 stated that she “would want to start the coaching cycle at the beginning of the term so that it is easier to implement strategies.” She

found it difficult that the coaching cycles began in the middle of the semester because her students were already used to a specific routine. It was sometimes tricky for her to embed new strategies in a lesson plan that was already in place.

In addition to the timing of the coaching cycles, Participant 1 suggested that “it would be interesting to see how data plays out over time and learn new ways to measure impact.” She also would have liked more opportunities to do a deeper dive into “adjusting future lessons to meet the goals in the coaching cycles.” There was also a desire from Participant 2 to have more time to “research and add more learning opportunities, especially for someone who’s not a trained educator.” Overall, both participants provided valuable insight into the strengths and areas for opportunity in making the intervention design more effective for future use.

Student data. The use of student data provided participants an opportunity to connect their instructional practices to student outcomes. This section presents the goals, data collected, and outcomes for each participant.

Participant 1: Coaching Cycle 1. For the first coaching cycle, Participant 1 wanted to set high expectations for all students by increasing student-to-student talk during whole-group and small-group discussion activities. She realized that in her classes, students would converse with her as the teacher but would rarely engage in conversations with each other. To collect data toward this goal, she created a tracker on which she and the coach noted how many times students took the initiative to talk to their peers without prompting and how many times students would respond to a peer’s comment. During the baseline observation, of the 11 students in the class, two took the initiative to engage in discussion with their peers without being prompted, and three responded directly to a peer’s comment.

Based on this information, during the observation debrief, the coach and participant brainstormed various strategies to support the student-to-student dynamic. Of these ideas, Participant 1 decided to edit her lesson plans to add more opportunities for discussion, incorporate intentional and thoughtful discussion questions, and model being an active member during whole-group and small-group discussions.

During the implementation phase, the coach utilized the same tracker from the preassessment stage to assess the difference in student-to-student interaction after Participant 1 incorporated her strategies. Five out of 11 students took the initiative to engage in conversations with their peers and two responded to a peer's comment. In her reflection at the end of the first coaching cycle, when asked what the student data indicated about her students' progress toward coaching goal, Participant 1 stated,

Students are talking way more to each other. In the prior observation, students were speaking to me or into the universe, but now it's more of a volleying of comments between students even if it is not related to the content.

Furthermore, when asked what her next steps would be based on the data, she added, "With more time, I would like to have more chances for students to share out and respond to peers. I want to normalize the process and make it part of our routine."

Participant 1: Coaching Cycle 2. Given the findings and the data collected from the first coaching cycle, Participant 1 decided to change her second coaching cycle goal. She wanted to focus directly on utilizing strategies to increase student-to-student talk for a specific subgroup of students who did not often talk to their peers. The data helped her realize that although she did see an increase in the number of students initiating peer conversations, it was predominately the same students leading discussions. To identify which students needed the most support, during

the preassessment observation, the coach tracked the frequency of students talking with each other and documented who was speaking to whom.

During the observation debrief, the coach and participant reviewed the data and found that four students did not speak much during class unless it was to the teacher. In identifying strategies to support these students, Participant 1 decided to use warm-demander techniques, such as calling on students, asking follow-up questions to push students' thinking, using affirmations, and setting high standards and expectations for student engagement. A warm demander describes a type of teacher who communicates warmth and positive reinforcement to students while also setting high expectations and pushing students to produce high-quality work (Ross, Bondy, & Hambacher, 2008). While she was collecting data on how this strategy worked across all students, Participant 1 paid close attention to the students she identified as needing more support.

In the last observation, the coach documented several examples of Participant 1 asking students to explain their responses or provide additional information. The coach also observed that "students seemed engaged and interacted a bit with each other" during this observation. She identified more verbal, off-mic interactions than in prior observations. During the debrief, Participant 1 stated that she noticed students engaging in conversations with other students they did not usually speak to and directing fewer conversations toward her as the teacher. In addition, Participant 1 reported having to do a lot less pushing to get students to speak. She also reported that as she continues to use various strategies, she hopes students will take more ownership over their learning.

At the end of the second cycle, Participant 1 stated that although she did see an increase in student-to-student talk in general, she saw growth with only one of the four students she was

focused on. Asked how the data would inform her next steps to support her students, she said, “I want to be more targeted in the follow-up questions I ask and pushing for more understanding rather than just taking an idea and thought as it is.” Through the student data, Participant 1 created a more targeted goal for her second coaching cycle. Additionally, she identified specific ways she wanted to improve her classroom management related to high-quality student-to-student interactions.

Participant 2: Coaching Cycle 1. Participant 2 had a similar goal to Participant 1 for her first coaching cycle: She wanted to increase students’ speaking without prompting. However, she was particularly interested in them sharing ideas and advocating for their needs. The metrics she used to evaluate progress toward her goal were the number of times students spoke without being called on, how long students spoke, and whether or not students were taking time to reflect on their ideas. Additionally, before starting the coaching cycle, Participant 2 asked her students to complete an anonymous self-evaluation that rated their comfort speaking in class on a Likert scale of 1 (*very uncomfortable*) to 5 (*very comfortable*). Of the 13 students, three rated their comfort level at 1, six at 2, two at 3, one at 4, and one at 5.

Based on the information gathered in the survey, Participant 2 decided to incorporate various strategies, including using more wait time for students to think about their responses. She also recognized a need to scaffold the types of questions she asked, moving from more concrete questions that required students to give a specific answer, to more abstract questions that pushed students to make interpretations about the information they were learning.

Utilizing the metrics set at the beginning of the coaching cycle, the coach found that 31% of Participant 2’s students spoke without prompting during the baseline observation. During the second observation, this number increased to 57%; however, the percentage decreased to 50%

during the final observation. In addition to students speaking without prompting, the coach noted more students were willing to ask for help and observed an increase in how long students spoke when responding to questions. Further supporting the student data from the survey was the postcycle survey Participant 2 gave to her students. The survey followed the same format and asked the same question as the precycle survey. Of the 10 students who responded, two students rated their comfort at 1, two rated their comfort at 2, one rated their comfort at 3, and five rated their comfort at 4; none of the students rated their comfort at 5. The findings from the survey showed an increase in the number of students who felt comfortable speaking in class.

Participant 2: Coaching Cycle 2. After seeing the increase in students' comfort with speaking in class, Participant 2 decided to shift the focus of her second coaching cycle to increasing student-to-student interactions. Specifically, the participant wanted each student to interact with at least one other student in each class and hoped to see an increase in the variation of student interactions. This goal was to increase the sense of community among students in a virtual setting by supporting them in building relationships with people they did not typically interact with. The coach and participant used a conversation matrix to track distinct verbal and written interactions between students. Additionally, Participant 2 gave students another anonymous precycle and postcycle survey asking them to rate how well they knew their classmates on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing *I don't know anyone* and 5 representing *I know everyone*.

During the baseline observation, the coach found that although students seemed more comfortable speaking after the first coaching cycle, the content of what they shared was directly related to the curriculum. Given the focus of this coaching cycle in increasing student-to-student interactions to build a sense of community, the coach found no explicit direction or modeling

from the participant on how students should share in a way that helped build community. In addition to the observation, the survey results showed that many students did not know other students in their class. Of the eight students who responded, three rated how well they knew their classmates as 1, two rated it as 2, two rated it as 3, and one rated it as 4; no students placed knowing their classmates at a 5.

Based on this feedback, Participant 2 decided to include more opportunities for shout-outs and peer reflections within the lessons. She hoped that by modeling and creating space for affirmations and reflections, students would increase the number of people they interacted with by noticing new things about different students. Using the student data as a guide to track progress, the coach noted that during the baseline observation, 11% of students talked to each other; during the second observation, 33% of students interacted with each other; and finally, during the last observation, 56% of students engaged in student-to-student talk. There was also an increase in how well students felt they knew their classmates. In the postcycle survey, of the eight students who responded, one student rated how well they knew their classmates at 1, two students rated it at 2, four rated it at 3, one rated it at 4, and zero rated it at 5.

Student Data Summary. The use of student data is an essential aspect of student-centered coaching (Sweeney, 2014). It allows teachers to focus on how their instructional practices influence student outcomes (Sweeney, 2011). Participants acknowledged using data as a useful accountability tool in making sure that instruction is high quality. Participant 1 reported that the student data allowed her to make connections between the coach's observation and what was happening in the classroom. Participant 2 noted that having students complete self-evaluations provided her with the opportunity to see how instructional practices directly impacted students' views of their experiences in the class. However, specific to areas of improvement, Participant 2

noted that she would love to learn new ways of collecting data to make sure she continues to use various tools to track student progress. The participant further emphasized the need for more time to analyze and interpret data to better inform her strategies to make progress toward her teaching goals.

Outcome Evaluation

The purpose of an outcome evaluation is to determine whether or not an intervention had the intended outcome on the individuals involved (Rossi, Lipsey, & Henry, 2019). The findings from the process evaluation included high fidelity of implementation and the participants' description of the quality of the coaching cycles. Therefore, this researcher attributes the outcome evaluation findings to the intervention described. This outcome evaluation presents changes to participants' knowledge and use of culturally responsive classroom management practices.

Qualitative Coding and Theme Development

The coding process for the outcome evaluation followed the same data analysis process as that of the process evaluation. Data sources that informed the themes for the outcome evaluation included pre- and postintervention interviews, coach's observations, meeting notes, and participant reflection forms. Table 5.2 shows the themes that surfaced across the outcome evaluation research questions.

Table 5.2

Themes and Codes for Outcome Evaluation Research Questions

Theme	Definition	Sample code
Instructional practice	The strategies, tools, and moves participants use specifically related to content delivery	Strategies Instructional delivery Behavior management Differentiation Positive narration
Developing relationships	The relationships that exist within a classroom environment	Peer to peer interaction Teacher-to-student interaction Student-to-teacher interaction Level of trust Class culture
Student support	The strategies, tools, and moves used specifically to help students understand content	Student ownership Student leadership Personalization Feedback Reflection

Changes to Knowledge of Culturally Responsive Classroom Management

The third research question aimed to understand how student-centered coaching cycles influenced changes to knowledge of culturally responsive classroom management. This section presents changes to knowledge around instructional practices, developing relationships, and student support and involvement.

Instructional practice. In the coaching sessions, reflections, and postintervention interviews, participants reported learning a variety of new instructional strategies that could support their students.

Participant 1. Participant 1 related being “really curious about new strategies and how they can play out in different scenarios, with different learners, and with different people with different cultures and experiences.” She also highlighted that through the coaching cycles, she

learned about being a warm demander and how it could help support diverse students by setting high expectations and providing them with the support they need to succeed. Furthermore, she expressed that she “gained more of an understanding of different instructional strategies, theories, and practices” that she could “use for different outcomes.” She learned “how to be more intentional about choosing which practices” she uses and “how it impacts different students.” In addition to utilizing various strategies, Participant 1 observed that “one of the most important outcomes for students is the consistent instructional practices so that they are aware of the expectations and can feel confident in themselves.”

Participant 2. Participant 2 stated that the coaching cycles “opened a bit of a box of things” that she did not know. She found that when thinking about the needs of her students, it is “important to create lessons that allow for peer-to-peer engagement and having the design centered on the topics that students are interested in and can lead.” She said she needs to continue to challenge herself to “think more deeply about how students can get to know each other in the class.” She found a “tension between teaching the content and creating space where what is being taught is actually received and processed by students.” Furthermore, she expressed that through the coaching cycles, she learned the importance of explaining the “why” of a lesson or activity with students and scaffolding instruction to include reflection and checks for understanding. Participant 2 recognized there are “a lot of different behaviors and ways of being that are acceptable” and that it is vital to seek to “understand why a student is acting a certain way” to make sure that she is addressing the behavior appropriately.

Developing relationships. In addition to instructional practices, another theme that emerged was developing authentic relationships in the classroom. These relationships included peer-to-peer and teacher-student connections.

Participant 1. Creating a strong classroom culture where students felt comfortable with each other was essential to Participant 1. She stated that she had “forgotten the relational peer-to-peer part of the classroom” and “didn’t know who were friends” in her class until she set her coaching cycle goal and started to collect data toward increasing student-to-student talk. She “realized that students need a sense of belonging, a safe community, but those can only happen through trust and a strong relationship with educators and their peers.” Developing authentic relationships that help support a conducive classroom culture was why Participant 1 focused both her coaching cycle goals on student interactions. She realized that she wanted her students to feel comfortable with each other and recognized the importance of these interactions on how they perceived the lesson and the class.

Participant 2. Participant 2 stated that developing authentic relationships would help her “learn more about cultural competence” from her students. She wants to make sure that she “lets the students kind of let me know about their culture through those authentic interactions with them.” She realized that she could have her own “outside perspective of what different cultures are like and what’s important to them.” However, through developing relationships with her students, she “learns what is important to them, what they want to share, and how they view the world through their eyes.” Participant 2 stated that she “felt more connected to the students” through her coaching cycle goal. “Thinking intentionally about having students get to know each other” helped her get to know her students and make connections in the classroom. She wants to continue to place “connecting with students at the center so that students are more comfortable expressing themselves.”

Student support and involvement. Developing authentic relationships with students can help educators understand how to support their students better. Thus, another theme surrounding

changes to knowledge of culturally responsive classroom management was supporting students and making sure they are actively involved in their learning.

Participant 1. Participant 1 asserted, “I genuinely believe students can do something if they set their minds to it and if they have the support they need.” The participant said she learned to meet students where they are, explaining, “It’s not like a ‘Go Google it yourself’ mentality; it is ‘Let’s Google it together because I know you can do it, but I’m here doing it with you.’” Although there is a need to push students and have high expectations, it is also essential for her to “scaffold those supports so that students can feel confident doing things on their own.” Personalization, another way Participant 1 learned to support students, entailed “look[ing] at each student and what they need to do, then preemptively find[ing] moments where I can push them.” Along these lines, she added, “It’s important to think about how much they ask for help and make small edits in my instruction to make a difference for them.”

In addition to setting high expectations and scaffolding support, Participant 1 learned the value of positive affirmations. She explained, “Students need to know you see them, and adding words of affirmation and positive feedback helps them feel supported and not feel any negative emotions when sharing their thoughts and feelings.” Finally, Participant 1 highlighted the importance of transparency with students, saying, “I found that students were more willing to support me and give me feedback when I shared my coaching goal with them.” She emphasized this point by noting that “having transparency with students about educator learning and improvement will show that we consistently lead by example and are also growing and trying to get better.”

Participant 2. Participant 2 explained, “The coaching cycles are a lot more in tune to how students are receiving and interacting with the material.” By using student data, Participant 2

learned that “students are more willing to ask for help if you create the structures and support for them to do so.” Therefore, she identified the importance of “thinking about the barriers to students speaking in class and finding ways to decrease those barriers.” She said that by “seeing when students vocalize when they don’t understand something,” she can follow up with positive reinforcement. This reinforcement is important because “students who speak up feel more engaged, like they want to be the class and like the class is their community.” For that reason, Participant 2 wants to continue learning “different ways to increase ownership and leadership opportunities for students.”

Changes to Use of Culturally Responsive Classroom Management Strategies

In addition to exploring changes to knowledge of culturally responsive classroom management strategies, the study was a means to investigate whether there were changes in culturally responsive classroom management strategies because of the intervention. Instructional practices and student involvement are the two areas of change both participants identified in their class management strategies.

Instructional practice. Instructional practices included the strategies and tools the participants wanted to continue using due to the intervention. These instructional strategies ranged from adding shout-outs to making lessons more relevant to the lives and cultures of the students.

Participant 1. Participant 1 felt like the coaching cycles provided her with an “opportunity to try new things” in her class that she had not known before. She expressed that the coaching cycles made her more comfortable and confident with her instruction. When it came to changes in her use of culturally responsive classroom management strategies, Participant 1 has incorporated “more instances of calling on moments where students are saying and doing

things that are good, to shout them out.” Furthermore, she has started to normalize having students share and respond to peers, saying, “I am now trying to make sure that every class has a chance for students to interact with each other.”

However, Participant 1 also noted that it is a challenge to “create a culture of student talk.” While there were improvements in “student talk” during the coaching cycles, she wished she “could have seen more improvements of students leading discussions more frequently.” Therefore, another tool she uses is “adjusting the curriculum to create more opportunities where students are the leaders and owners of the lesson.” One way she has done this by “adding more relevant readings” to her class to allow students to connect with the content. She noticed that by adding relevant content, students are more engaged because they “see themselves and their experiences” in the lesson. She is also trying to set high expectations of what student engagement looks like by “asking follow-up questions that are targeted and pushing for more understanding rather than just taking ideas and thoughts as it is.” While the coaching cycles did change her use of culturally responsive classroom management practices by focusing more on how her instruction impacts her students, she expressed that there is “still a lot to learn.” As a result, Participant 1 wanted to engage in more coaching to “dive deeper into learning new strategies” to support her students.

Participant 2. “How I manage my classroom has changed.” Participant 2 realized that there is a strong connection between student behavior and instruction, saying, “It’s less like, okay, let me make sure I have all the boxes checked for the content I have to teach and more focus on the way I am teaching it and how students are receiving it.” As a new educator, she noted that it is sometimes easy to focus on “what you need to do and forget how students are

taking it.” Therefore, she intentionally incorporates “checks for understanding” to ensure that students are actually learning.

In addition to including more checks, Participant 2 began using more wait time because of the coaching cycles. Introducing wait time was initially difficult for Participant 2, who used to feel the need to speak when it was quiet. However, she found that using this strategy during her coaching cycle was beneficial for increasing student engagement. She explained, “It sometimes feels very long, but seeing it really work in giving students time to think before responding makes me okay with being uncomfortable waiting a long time.”

Participant 2 has also started incorporating more “strategies for peer-to-peer interactions,” such as pair-and-share, turn-and-talks, and peer critique and feedback. She highlighted that it is important to model what these interactions should look like so students “know what you are expecting from any given interaction.” Therefore, in addition to creating opportunities for peer-to-peer collaboration, she is also trying to be intentional about sharing criteria for success so that “students feel confident going into any conversation or discussion.”

Student involvement. Having students feel like leaders in their learning was essential to the participants. Given that both their coaching cycles focused on student leadership and ownership, they highlighted changes in how they used various strategies to increase student involvement and support in their classrooms.

Participant 1. Participant 1 expressed the need for students to have multiple means of engaging in a conversation. She explained, “I am now making sure I am asking students opinions on whatever we are talking about and making sure there are a variety of ways they can share, whether it be verbally or written.” She defined being culturally responsive as acknowledging the different ways students learn and using different strategies to help them engage with the content.

Additionally, having students see their peers as a resource and support system was vital for Participant 1. She noted that students would direct all conversations toward her before the coaching cycles; now, she is “encouraging more students to engage with each other.” Last, she started setting high expectations for students by finding “moments to push them to trust in themselves and navigate tricky situations.” Instead of giving students all the answers, Participant 1 is now making them engage in “productive struggle” to see that they are “capable of navigating challenging situations and being owners of their learning.”

Participant 2. The participant reported, “I feel much more comfortable with the curriculum and my instruction, so now I am able to focus more on how students are receiving it versus just putting out the material and going through the steps.” For Participant 2, ensuring that students understand the content has been a significant change in her instruction. She began including “learning target reflection” in every class. Students assessed their progress toward any given learning target at the beginning and end of each week. Through this, she gathered data directly from students on whether they were learning the content. Additionally, Participant 2 tries to incorporate more “targeted reflections” to help them better understand the content, explaining, “I found that by using reflections, I am able to see whether or not I need to reteach anything or what changes I need to make to the way I teach.”

Discussion

The discipline gap for Black students in urban settings is a continuing problem in education. Black students are three times more likely to face exclusionary consequences than their White peers (Triplett et al., 2014). Although many factors contribute to the discipline gap, this intervention showed that providing educators with the individualized support needed to work with diverse student learners is a positive step toward dismantling the discipline gap.

This qualitative case study was a means to explore how student-centered coaching cycles could increase teachers' knowledge and use of culturally responsive classroom management practices to better meet the needs of their students. By using student-centered coaching, educators can connect their instructional practices to student outcomes (Sweeney, 2014). Additionally, as evidenced by the intervention, the collaborative nature of the coaching provides educators with a safe place to try new strategies, discuss challenging situations, and create targeted goals to address a particular problem (Knight, 2018).

Several factors contributed to the success of the coaching cycles, including collaboration with a coach, dedicated time for reflection, and the use of student data. Participants identified the coach's content knowledge, demeanor, and involvement as key contributors to them feeling comfortable expressing their challenges. Additionally, having dedicated time to reflect on their classroom and instructional practice was helpful for the participants because this was the first time they received this form of individualized coaching. Participant 2 noted, "My experience was really positive. I don't normally have enough time to get this type of coaching." This need for dedicated time is further supported by Darling-Hammond et al.'s (2017) idea that for professional learning to be effective, it must be sustained over time to allow educators to practice, learn, and try out different strategies. The use of student data also contributed to the effectiveness of the coaching cycles. By using student data in observations and coaching goals, participants could see how their instruction influenced students. This form of coaching places the students' needs at the center, which shifts the focus from fixing the teacher to increasing student successes (Sweeney, 2011).

The study's findings showed that student-centered coaching cycles could help educators better understand and support their students. One of the reasons the coaching cycles were

student-centered instead of teacher centered was because of the intentionality in student-centered coaching on collecting student evidence that directly connected to instructional practices. It forced participants not just to think about instructional strategies that worked for their teaching style but also strategies that directly impacted student outcomes. Both participants saw progress toward their coaching cycle goals and found using student data a valuable tool to assess their instructional practices. In Chapter 1, teacher decision-making and relationships with students were factors that contributed to the discipline gap for Black students. The themes of instructional practice, developing relationships, and student support emerged around changes to knowledge and culturally responsive classroom management practices because of the coaching cycles. Muniz (2019) posited that educators who engage in culturally responsive classroom management utilize content that is relevant to their students. One key finding across both participants was adjusting the curriculum to include more content with which the students identified. Additionally, in both of their coaching goals, participants aimed to increase student voice in the classroom, thereby boosting student engagement. Furthermore, engaging in instructional practices that consider the needs of diverse student learners is another key aspect of culturally responsive classroom management (Gay, 2010). Both participants highlighted the changes to their practice, such as including more wait time to help students process, incorporating reflections into their lessons, and pushing students to engage more thoughtfully in the content.

Equally as crucial as being intentional about one's instructional practices is developing authentic relationships with students. As highlighted in Chapter 1, teachers from cultures or backgrounds different than their students may struggle to build authentic and successful relationships with their students (Kozlowski, 2015). Participants in this study began to think about how their relationships with students can play a role in the students' perceptions of the

class culture. They considered various techniques to increase student-to-student interactions and in the process were able to learn more about themselves and their students. Participant 2 noted, “I am hoping that these practices will also continue to help students develop stronger relationships with each other.” Similarly, Participant 1 stated, “I had forgotten how the relational peer-to-peer part of class plays a role in building community.” Continuing to develop relationships with students could help increase students’ sense of belonging (Côté-Lussier & Fitzpatrick, 2016), which, in turn, increases their engagement within the classroom (Bondy et al., 2007).

Last, as noted in Chapter 3, educators in a culturally responsive classroom use a variety of activities to support the needs and learning styles of diverse students (Gay, 2002). Through the coaching cycles, participants identified various ways to support their student learners, including positive narration, differentiated ways of engaging in a lesson, and students being active participants in their learning. Many Black students base their perceptions of success on how their teachers view them (Hinojosa, 2008). Therefore, finding ways to meet students where they are, setting high expectations, and pushing students to meet those expectations can help build students’ confidence in their abilities.

Limitations and Implications for Practice and Future Research

There are several limitations to this research, including the sample size, the context in which the study took place, the length of the study, and the research design. Given the small sample size ($N = 2$) and the individualized nature of the coaching cycles, the findings are not generalizable to other populations. Additionally, the study took place during COVID-19, which meant that the coaching and classes where instruction was happening took place in a virtual setting. Therefore, the strategies and resources provided were based on virtual classes and instruction.

The length of the study was also a limitation given that the participants engaged in only two coaching cycles; therefore, the findings are limited to what took place during those two sessions. In further indication of this limitation, participants stated that they would have appreciated more time in each coaching cycle to see the impact of the strategies over an extended period rather than just 4 to 6 weeks. Finally, because qualitative case study findings are based on the researcher's interpretation, there is a possibility for researcher bias. Although this researcher tried to control for bias by having an external coach conduct coaching cycles, the findings are subject to researcher analysis and interpretation.

Despite the small sample size and the findings based on individual goals, the study showed how student-centered coaching could serve as a strategy to support educators who teach diverse student learners. The intervention can be replicated and used in other settings. There are three main implications for future research. The first is the consideration of a larger and more diverse sample. Finding participants from various youth-serving organizations in different locations could help increase the generalizability of the study. Second, the context of the study took place virtually. Future researchers should consider using student-centered coaching in both in-person and virtual settings to assess the positive and negative effects that coaching in both of these settings can have on intended outcomes. This will help to expand the literature on how individualized coaching influences the discipline gap when students are learning both remotely and in person. Finally, this study did not address classes with co-teachers. Future scholars should consider how individualized coaching influences classes with a co-teaching model. This is an important consideration because both teachers play an equal role in educating the students; therefore, their instructional practices and goals should be consistent to produce the best outcomes for diverse learners.

As it relates to implications for practice, youth-serving organizations should explore how they can incorporate individualized support and training to better prepare educators for success in classes. As noted in Chapter 3, staff professional development does not address the targeted needs of specific educators and the students in their classrooms (Knight, 2009). Therefore, by adding individualized coaching, educators can transfer and apply what they learn in all-staff training to their classroom. Additionally, by working with an external coach, educators have the opportunity to share challenges without worrying it will impact their evaluation.

Another implication for practice is the identified need to use student data to support the strategies and tools given to educators. By using student data, both the teacher and the coach are able to make connections between the instructional practices and student outcomes. This strategy places the focus on the students and their needs rather than the educators and their abilities. Furthermore, student data provide evidence toward specific goals, which helps the teacher identify how and where to improve to produce high-quality outcomes.

Conclusion

This study contributed to the literature on how to dismantle the discipline gap by providing a tool to support educators in working with diverse student learners. The findings from the study indicated how student-centered coaching could increase educators' knowledge and use of culturally responsive classroom management practices. These changes include ways to create a student-driven culture through culturally responsive instructional practices, the importance of developing authentic relationships with students, and the need to use various strategies to support students as leaders of their own learning. With ongoing navigation of educational spaces, teachers should continue asking the question, "Is what we are doing in the best interest of the

students we are serving?” Only in this way can educators place students at the forefront and make decisions that consider the needs of all learners.

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Appendix A

Semistructured Interview Questions

1. What is the goal or goals of discipline in schools?
2. Please describe your role as you see it for student discipline in the school.
3. Please share your thoughts on how principals could exercise discretion appropriately for discipline in schools.
4. Please share your thoughts on how school administrators could exercise discretion inappropriately for discipline in schools.
5. How do you feel about your obligation to enforce rules, laws, and policies in decision-making in student disciplinary issues?
6. What different considerations or principles do you use to guide your decision-making when disciplining a student?
7. What kinds of disciplinary situations cause you to feel hesitant or conflicted to apply a law, rule, or school policy in your decision-making?
8. What information or knowledge do you require when you make discretionary decisions for student discipline?

Appendix B

Recruitment E-mail

Hello Education Team Members,

This e-mail is an invitation to participate in a study I am conducting to help educators increase their knowledge on culturally responsive classroom management practices to support the behavioral needs of diverse student learners.

The purpose of the study is to understand how coaching cycles could provide educators with the needed support to address the needs of their students. Through individualized coaching provided by external coach, you will receive one-on-one support, resources, and strategies helpful for understanding the influence of your classroom management practices on your students' behaviors. This study will occur between October 2020 and January 2021. The study will include two preintervention professional development sessions, two to three coaching cycles (lasting 4 to 6 weeks), and a final interview of your experience.

I have attached a consent form with additional details about the study, but if you have any questions or would like to talk more about the study, feel free to contact me via telephone or in person. If you read the consent form and want to participate, please sign the form and send it back to me by September 18, 2020.

Your participation in this study will be voluntary. You can choose whether to participate. If you decide not to participate, there are no penalties, and you will not lose any benefits to which you would otherwise be entitled. Any study records with identifying information will remain confidential to the extent possible by law. Additionally, all reflection forms and interview data will remain confidential.

Let me know if you have any questions or would like to discuss further in person or via telephone.

Thank you,

Yasenia

Appendix C

Preinterview Questions

1. To the best of your knowledge, please describe how your classroom is a diverse classroom (e.g., gender, race, culture, ability).
2. What does culturally responsive classroom management mean to you?
3. How confident do you feel in managing a culturally diverse student classroom?
4. What impact, if any, does culture have on how you perceive student behavior?
5. What practices do you engage in to manage a culturally diverse classroom?
6. What factors do you consider when trying to understand your students' behaviors?

Appendix D

Postinterview Questions

1. How would you describe your experience in the intervention?
2. How would you describe the quality of the coaching in the coaching cycles?
3. How did your knowledge of culturally responsive classroom management practices increase after participating in this intervention?
4. How have you changed your classroom management strategies after participating in the intervention?
5. What factors do you consider when trying to understand your students' behaviors?

Appendix E

Reflection Form Questions

Answer the following questions

1. How did you grow as a teacher during this coaching cycle?
2. If you did not see any benefits, how could we adjust the coaching cycle in the future?
3. How will the instructional practices you developed in coaching have an impact on student learning?
4. Do you feel that your coach believes in you and your ability to impact student learning? Why or why not?
5. Do you feel comfortable discussing challenges with your coach? Why or why not?
6. Which were the elements of the coaching cycle the most and the least useful to you? Why?
7. Was there a balance between direct feedback from your coach and your own inquiry? Why or why not?
8. If you were going to do this cycle again, what would you do differently?

Appendix F

Coach Observation Tool

Observation Notes

Teacher	
Observer(s)	
Date	
Coaching Goal:	
Look-fors Based on Coaching Conversation:	

Instructional Practice	Student Evidence

Possible Debrief Questions/Considerations for Next Steps

1. What really worked here? How were the needs of all learners met?
2. What instructional practices moved student learning toward the learning target/goal?
3. What additional strategies should be considered to address student challenges?

Next Steps for Instruction and Assessment	Lingering Questions and Support Needed

Appendix G

Initial Partnership Meeting Template

Initial Coaching Meeting Agenda (approximately 30 minutes)

Purpose for today's meeting:

Begin to create a trusting and productive coaching relationship

Part 1: Getting to know you

1a. How do you like to process data/observation notes?

1b. How do you like to communicate about observation notes and debriefs?

1c. How do you like feedback delivered?

1d. What concerns do you have about coaching?

1e. What else do you want your coach to know about you as a teacher and learner?

1f. Our organization's norms will be the norms for our work together. Do you have any questions or concerns about these norms as they relate to our work together?

1g. Do you have any additional questions or thoughts about our work together?

Appendix H

Goal-Setting Meeting Template

Guiding Questions to Identify Coaching Goal (60 minutes)

1. What is the goal for student learning for this coaching cycle? What do we hope the students will learn as a result of our partnership?
2. What are the student work or data that could enable us to decide on a focus that could have the most impact with students?
3. Which core competency does this goal address?
4. What are the criteria for success to help students reach the goal? How will you know that you or the students met the goal?
5. What are your hopes for your students as [INSERT GOAL] as a result of our coaching work?
6. What challenges do you foresee us facing as we work toward this goal? How can we address these challenges?
7. What amount of student growth would you find realistic and inspiring?
8. What data can we use to collect data on this goal? Both baseline and post coaching cycle?

Appendix I

Bambrick-Santoyo and Peiser's Six Steps of Effective Feedback

Step 1 Praise 1–2 minutes	Praise: Narrate the positive
Step 2 Probe 3–5 minutes	Probe: Ask targeted open-ended question and scaffold to identify the core issue
Step 3 Identify problem and create action step 3–5 minutes	Action: Identify a problem and provide a single, concrete, highest leverage action step that the teacher can work toward
Step 4 Practice 5–8 minutes	Practice: Role play/simulate the action step identified
Step 5 Plan ahead 3–5 minutes	Plan: Design and revise upcoming lesson to implement action
Step 6 Set a time for follow up 1–2 minutes	Follow up: Set time and method for follow up observation

Appendix J

Items Included in the Disciplinary Practices Scale

A. Attitude Toward Discipline in General

- I feel that getting to know students individually is an important part of discipline.
- Although it would be nice to get to know students on an individual basis, especially those who need help, my duties in my school simply don't allow me the time.
- I feel it is critical to work with parents before suspending a student from school.
- The primary purpose of discipline is to teach appropriate skills to the disciplined student.
- Students should receive some recognition or reward for appropriate behavior.
- It is sad but true that, in order to meet increasingly high standards of academic accountability, some students will probably have to be removed from school.
- The majority of this school's discipline problems could be solved if we could only remove the most persistent troublemakers.
- Schools cannot afford to tolerate students who disrupt the learning environment.

B. Awareness and Enforcement of Disciplinary Procedures

- My school keeps detailed records regarding student suspension and expulsion.
- Teachers at my school are aware of school disciplinary policies.
- I believe students at my school are aware of school disciplinary policies.
- Violence is getting worse in my school.
- Disciplinary policies are strictly enforced in my school.

C. Beliefs Concerning Suspension/Expulsion and Zero Tolerance

- Out-of-school suspension makes students less likely to misbehave in the future.
- Zero tolerance makes a significant contribution to maintaining order at my school.
- I believe suspension and expulsion allow students time away from school that encourages them to think about their behavior.
- Suspension and expulsion do not really solve discipline problems.
- Out-of-school suspension is a necessary tool for maintaining school order.
- Zero tolerance sends a clear message to disruptive students about appropriate behaviors in school.
- Students who are suspended or expelled are only getting more time on the streets that will enable them to get in more trouble.
- I believe suspension is unnecessary if we provide a positive school climate and challenging instruction.
- Out-of-school suspension is used at this school only as a last resort.
- Regardless of whether it is effective, suspension is virtually our only option in disciplining disruptive students.

- Certain students are not gaining anything from school and disrupt the learning environment for others. In such a case, the use of suspension and expulsion is justified to preserve the learning environment for students who wish to learn.
- Zero tolerance increases the number of students being suspended or expelled.

D. Beliefs about Responsibility for Handling Student Misbehaviors

- The primary responsibility for teaching children how to behave appropriately in school belongs to parents.
- Teachers ought to be able to manage the majority of students' misbehavior in their classroom.
- Most if not all discipline problems come from inadequacies in the student's home situation.
- Schools must take responsibility for teaching students how to get along and behave appropriately in school.

E. Attitude Toward Differential Discipline of Disadvantaged Students or Students With Disabilities

- Teachers at this school were, for the most part, adequately trained by their teacher training program to handle problems of misbehavior and discipline.
- I need additional resources to increase my school's capacity to reduce and prevent troublesome behaviors.
- Disciplining disruptive students is time consuming and interferes with other important functions in the school.

F. Resources Available for Discipline

- Suspensions and expulsions hurt students by removing them from academic learning time.
- In-school suspension is a viable alternative disciplinary practice to suspension and expulsion.
- Please rate the extent to which the following programs are used in maintaining discipline and promoting safety in your school:
 - (a). Social skills and conflict resolution training for all students
 - (b). Individual behavior plans or programs for disruptive students
 - (c). Counseling or therapy
 - (d). Peer mediation
 - (e). In-class telephones for reporting behavior problems
 - (f). In-service training and workshops for teachers on classroom management
 - (g). Metal detector and/or video technology
 - (h). Bullying prevention programs
 - (i). Security guard, resource officer, or police presence
 - (j). Instruction in social skill, problem-solving, or violence prevention
 - (k). Anger management training

- I believe that putting in place prevention programs (e.g., bullying programs, conflict resolution, improved classroom management) can reduce the need for suspension and expulsion.
- Time spent on prevention programs or individualized behavior programming is wasted if students are not willing to take responsibility for their behavior.
- Prevention programs would be a useful addition at our school, but there is simply not enough time in the day.
- I have noticed that time spent in developing and implementing prevention programs pays off in terms of decreased disruption and disciplinary incidents.

G. Attitude Toward and Availability of Prevention Strategies as an Alternative to Exclusion

- Students with disabilities who engage in disruptive behavior need a different approach to discipline than students in general education.
- Repeat offenders should receive more severe disciplinary consequences than first-time offenders.
- A student's academic record should be taken into account in assigning disciplinary consequences.
- Students with disabilities account for a disproportionate amount of the time spent on discipline at this school.
- Disciplinary regulations for students with disabilities create a separate system of discipline that makes it more difficult to enforce discipline at this school.
- Disadvantaged students require a different approach to discipline than other students.
- Students from different ethnic backgrounds have different emotional and behavioral needs.
- Suspension and expulsion are unfair to minority students.
- Disciplinary consequences should be scaled in proportion to the severity of the problem behavior.
- Conversations with students referred to the office are important and should be factored into most decisions about disciplinary consequences.

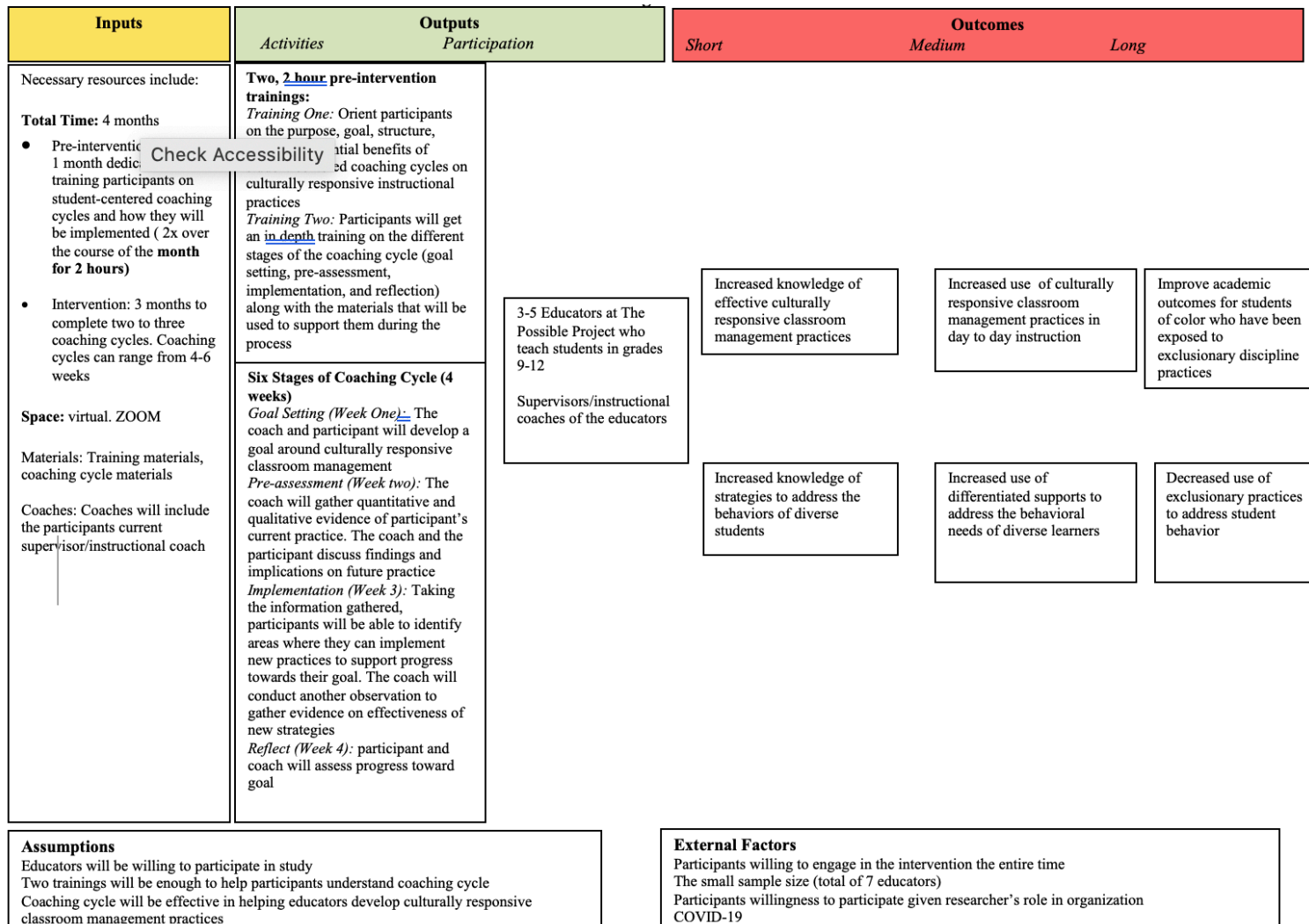
Appendix K

Summary Matrix

Research question	Construct	Data collection tool	Data analysis
To what extent was the intervention implemented as originally intended?	Visual diagram of planned implementation protocol versus actual implementation protocol	Researcher's field notes Logic model (Appendix L)	Comparison of planned implementation versus actual implementation
How did participants describe their experience in the intervention?	Overall experience during the coaching cycle Experience developing strategies during coaching cycles Experience with the using the resources for coaching cycle	Postintervention interview (Appendix D) Reflection form (Appendix E)	Inductive coding and thematic analysis
How did participants describe the quality of the coaching they received in the coaching cycles?	Quality of individual coaching	Postintervention interview (Appendix D) Reflection form (Appendix E)	Inductive coding and thematic analysis
In what ways did participants' knowledge of culturally responsive classroom management practices after participating in this intervention?	Educator knowledge of culturally responsive classroom management practices	Preintervention interview (Appendix C) Postintervention interview (Appendix D) Coach/educator meeting notes	Inductive coding and thematic analysis
How have participants' classroom management strategies changed after participating in the intervention?	Educator changes to classroom management practices Coach perception of educator's changes to classroom management practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Postinterview (Appendix D) • Reflection form (Appendix E) • Coach observation tool (Sweeney, 2011; Appendix F) • Coach/educator meeting notes 	Inductive coding and thematic analysis

Appendix L

Logic Model



Appendix M

Observation Debrief Protocol

In preparation for the conversation...

The coach should:

- Review the teacher's goal for the coaching cycle and notes from the goal-setting conference or previous coaching conversations.
- Spend at least 20 minutes observing classroom instruction aligned with the teacher's stated goal(s).
- Take notes about the observed lesson either during or immediately following the observation.
- Identify ONE strategic focus area for discussion during the meeting.
- Plan your coaching conversation based on the steps below.

The teacher should:

- Bring a copy of the lesson plan from the day of the visit along with significant pieces of student work from the lesson.*
- Bring long-term curriculum documents and upcoming lesson plans.

Feedback Template (30 minutes)

Step 1 Praise 1–2 minutes	Praise: Narrate the positive
Step 2 Probe 3–5 minutes	Probe: Ask targeted open-ended question and scaffold to identify the core issue
Step 3 Identify problem and create action step 3–5 minutes	Action: Identify a problem and provide a single, concrete, highest leverage action step that the teacher can work toward
Step 4 Practice 5–8 minutes	Practice: Role play/simulate the action step identified
Step 5 Plan ahead 3–5 minutes	Plan: Design and revise upcoming lesson to implement action

Step 6 Set a time for follow up 1–2 minutes	Follow up: Set time and method for follow up observation